Palladium Books® presents:

TURTLES GO HOLLYWOOD

Written By: **Daniel Greenberg**

Additional Text & Original Story Editor: **Kevin Siembieda**

Original Editor: **Alex Marciniszyn**

Cover Painting: **Kevin Long**

Interior Art: **Kevin Long**

Original Art Direction & Layout: **Kevin Siembieda**

Original Typography: **Maryann Garner**

ORIGINAL 1990 PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Illegal drugs kill thousands every year. Worse, they emotionally, mentally, and physically cripple millions!
Drugs are not a means to adventure. Drugs are not cool. And despite how things may appear, everybody is not using drugs!
Drugs destroy everything: the body, the mind, even love. Don't fool yourself into thinking otherwise.

– Kevin Siembieda

ORIGINAL 1990 DEDICATION

To Ardyth for everything.

– Daniel Greenberg

INTRODUCTION

This riotous adventure sends the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (or any group of mutant animal heroes) roaring into Hollywood, where they mix it up with everyone from starlets and surfers to moguls and mutants in a desperate battle for mankind's destiny. The dream vacation of a lifetime turns into a nightmare as the **Turtles Go Hollywood!**

THE STORY

The malevolent mutant *Labb Ratt* has concocted a scheme to subvert the will of humankind. He intends to psionically implant powerful subliminal messages in major Hollywood movies, exposing his twisted ideas to the wide audience of unsuspecting moviegoers out to see the fresh crop of summer releases.

Our heroes hurtle to Hollywood to stop the desperate scheme and get caught in the crossfire of a two-way war between the *Ratt Pak* and *Shredder's Foot Clan,* as both groups battle for control of the subliminal messaging technology.

During their misadventures in a world where appearance is more important than reality, they run into a clutch of bizarre characters; wheelers and dealers, phonies and flakes, lovers and losers, posers and popstars. They meet the opportunistic and the honest alike. And they get to trash huge, elaborate soundstages.

So what are we waiting for? Let's go Hollywood!

GAME MASTER NOTES

YOUR OWN CHARACTERS GO HOLLYWOOD!

While designed for use with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles characters, you can easily use this adventure with *any* mutant animal team.

Adapting **Turtles Go Hollywood!** is simple. Just replace all references to the Turtles with references to the Player Characters. Special passages in the text will show you how best to do this.

Each episode has a separate section on incorporating unique player characters to accommodate different heroes with different abilities. We'll cover flying characters and those with other super-human abilities, as well as a few special cases, like heroes who don't have an all-wise NPC mentor like Splinter.

Stay flexible, and the conversion process will be a breeze. Your players will love you for it.

SPECIAL EXPERIENCE POINT AWARDS

As with all **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** adventures, you will assign standard Experience Point awards to the players based on their characters' actions.

In addition to the normal awards, **Turtles Go Hollywood!** provides some special Experience Point (XP) awards for clever thinking and effective solutions. When the players earn one, make a note of it, and assign the accumulated awards after the play session is over. This invites the players to reflect on the ideas that worked, and encourages them to keep making clever choices.

These awards should also serve as guidelines to assist you in awarding Experience Points in future games.

MUSIC DURING THE ADVENTURE?!

Music can add a lot of depth to a role-playing experience. For an added kick, you might try playing some preselected movie soundtrack music during specific scenes of the adventure.

For example, play the theme from the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movie during the opening episode, play "I Love L.A." by Randy Newman (Trouble in Paradise album) during the Los Angeles sequences, play the *Jaws* theme during the shark attack, play the *James Bond* theme during the Foot Frogman attack, the *Star Wars* theme during the battle on the soundstage, etc.

SELF-MOTIVATION AND SUCCESS

Turtles Go Hollywood! rewards self-motivated players. Rather than always leading the Player Characters from one encounter to another, the adventure will often let the players decide what to do next and provide results for the most common options.

Games where players have control of their heroes' destinies are often more exciting and satisfying for both the players and the Game Master.

For example, in this adventure, the Turtles will receive a clue that leads them to the Monolithic movie studio. They know the answers they want lie inside the huge film compound, but what they do when they get there is up to them.

They could creep around inside the studio in a surreptitious ninja-style spy mission. Or they could masquerade as actors, special effects crew, or technicians and earn cooperation from people who work at Monolithic. Or they could come up with something totally original. It's up to the players!

As GM, we'll show you how to react to the many things your players may come up with, so encourage them to experiment. If they feel it's okay to try anything, they may just surprise you with some very inventive plans.

While most players love to set their characters loose in an exciting new setting, others might instead feel overwhelmed and confused. To handle those players, each encounter also has a *default result,* which will keep the adventure moving even if the players take no or little action. You, as GM, should never be lost, even if your players feel they are.

While the default results are never as good as the results from self-motivated action, they do keep the story moving, and should encourage the players to continue trying to come up with their own solutions.

CALIFORNIA, HERE WE ARE

We suggest playing **Turtles Go Hollywood!** as your first adventure series (or "campaign" — the RPG equivalent of a season of your favorite show).

However, if you played the **Truckin' Turtles** adventures with your group first, then our heroes are already on the West Coast. Rather than bring them back to New York for the first episode, only to haul them back to California for the rest of the adventure, set the first adventure in Los Angeles.

At the beginning of Reel 1 change the references from New York to L.A., and have the Turtles talk to Splinter by phone.

REEL 1: NIGHT MOVES

This first adventure sets the scene for the players and establishes the "Hollywood movie" tone of the game. At one point, the read-aloud text mentions the Turtles and their weapons. If your players are not running the Turtles, change the details to fit the player characters being used.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Long shot: New York Harbor by night. Low, mournful sounds of tugboats echo in the midnight gloom, as murky water gently laps against the docks. Slow pan across quiet, peaceful, old-world buildings. Camera-pan stops abruptly on a huge, foreboding, high-tech fortress that looms over the waterfront like a sullen giant, towering above the nearby buildings.

There's a strange creaking noise, and something on the ground in front of the fortress begins to rise. A manhole cover lifts up, and four shadowy figures silently emerge from the sewers. The mysterious creatures look up at the ponderous citadel and slowly draw their weapons. They hold high their twin katana blades, paired nunchaku, bo staff, and dual sai, as if to challenge the might of the entire stronghold.

The moonlight glints off their weapons, revealing the grim determination on their masked, green faces. Slowly, they approach the fortress.

Credits roll: TURTLES GO HOLLYWOOD!, starring (fill in the names of your players' heroes here).

GAME MASTER NOTE

Here's a good opportunity to use your first cut of music. The recommended soundtrack is the theme from the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movie.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

The fortress is the main headquarters of the crime cartel SoloChem. You have traced a few "test-market" shipments of an instantly addictive new designer drug, "Blue Ice," back to the labs on the top floor of this very respectable-looking, though heavily fortified, building. Mass shipments of Blue Ice are due to leave the building tomorrow for destinations around the country, where they will be given away as "free samples," creating hordes of instant addicts.

Bribes from SoloChem crime boss Fred Porcelain to high-ranking city officials have kept the police out of the citadel, but you have no such restrictions. And once a fight starts in the building, the police will have no choice but to enter and witness the drug manufacturing in progress. You silently prepare yourselves for the assault on the fortress' penthouse, determined to meet three major objectives given to you by your master (Splinter, if playing the Turtles):

1: Destroy the Blue Ice inside so that it can never reach the streets tomorrow.

2: Destroy the lab that created the drug.

3: Create enough commotion that the police are forced to enter and discover the operation.

On your honor, you swear that the night will see the end of SoloChem and their dangerous new creation, Blue Ice.

GAME MASTER NOTE

Nothing like starting out in the thick of the action, huh?

Give your players a moment to work out their strategy, and then go for it.

The Turtles can start the game with any standard ninja equipment, and any non-ninja equipment that they have *reasonable* access to. This includes rope, grappling hooks, climbing spikes, shuriken, photographic equipment, etc.

Non-Turtle characters should similarly have *reasonable* access to equipment and weapons fitting their background and circumstances.

GETTING TO THE ROOF

1) CLIMB THE BUILDING

The 20-floor SoloChem fortress is too tall to throw grappling hooks to the top floor, but the Ninja Turtles or other ninja characters could climb the building with their ninja climbing spikes (requires a successful Prowl roll and Climbing roll).

There are monitoring devices on the fortress. One of the characters must make a successful Surveillance Systems roll to avoid detection. If they are detected, the building goes on *Alert.*

2) CLIMB A NEARBY BUILDING AND RAPPEL OVER

The 20-floor tall SoloChem fortress is the highest building in the area. The two buildings next to it are only 12 floors, and the building behind it is 16 floors.

The heroes could climb or gain access to the shorter buildings nearby and then rappel over to the SoloChem building with grappling hooks.

Using a neighboring building will keep them from being spotted. Consequently, they don't need to make a Surveillance Systems roll like they would if they had climbed the SoloChem building from the ground up.

3) WINDOW STEALTH

Once our stalwart heroes are climbing up the building, they can enter through windows on any of the twenty floors, except the top floor. The top windows are covered over with inset metal blast doors (SDC 250.) They are not made to open. Pounding on the blast doors automatically puts the building on *Alert.*

Entering through a window could set off an alarm. The alarm systems here are not as sophisticated as the ones below. Add +25% to each player's Surveillance Systems roll to notice it, and +15% to

the Surveillance Systems roll to disable it. Failing the disable roll puts the SoloChem building on *Alert*.

Note: Other heroes may have the ability to fly, use a jet pack or helicopter, or even teleport directly to the SoloChem rooftop. Thus, climbing could be avoided entirely.

ON THE ROOF

ONCE THEY REACH THE ROOF, READ THE FOLLOWING:

> The roof is empty except for a few small chimneys, a helicopter, a two-foot-wide air duct, and a bored goon yawning as he patrols around a rooftop door. A walkie-talkie hangs at his hip, and he is listening to it through a pair of headphones.

The helicopter is crime boss Porcelain's rapid escape. If the heroes sabotage it (with a successful Mechanical Engineer or Aircraft Mechanics roll to do it stealthily, otherwise smashing the controls or blasting the chopper will do the job, but has a 60% chance of putting the building on *Alert*), Porcelain will have a difficult time escaping at the end of the attack.

The one guard is not paying much attention to his surroundings. Our heroes could sneak past him using Prowl, or attack him and knock him out easily - they automatically get the Initiative and strike first. *(See the Typical Goon entry in the SoloChem Characters section on page 148.)*

If they attempt Prowl and fail, they still have first attack on the goon before he can respond. If they still manage to alert him, he immediately radios for backup, putting the entire building on *Alert*, then activates hidden floodlights and draws his gun to investigate the intrusion. Six armed goons burst through the rooftop door in 1D4 rounds (15 to 60 seconds), ready for trouble.

1) ROOFTOP DOOR

The rooftop door has a tricky combination lock. Opening it requires a Surveillance Systems roll followed by a Pick Locks roll. Both rolls are made at a -20% penalty. Inform the players of the difficulty level before they attempt to open it.

The door has 250 SDC. Failing the Surveillance Systems roll or battering down the door puts the building on *Alert*.

2) ROOFTOP AIR DUCT

There is a large air duct in the southwest corner of the building. A thick screen covers it. There are no alarms on the air duct. The characters must make a Prowl roll to open the screen without alerting the guard. If he has already been incapacitated, there is no need for great stealth.

AIR DUCTS TO DROP CEILING

The top floor of the SoloChem building has drop ceilings; panels that are suspended two feet below the real ceiling. Electrical wiring, air ducts, and plumbing run through the two-foot gap.

If the group enters the building through the air duct, they exit the narrow shaft into the cramped crawlspace between the true ceiling and the drop ceiling. They cannot be seen by the people in the rooms below them and only loud noise will attract their attention. The heroes can see into the room below by pulling back one of the ceiling tiles.

Hiding in the drop ceiling gives the characters a decided tactical advantage, as they have the freedom to move through the entire penthouse virtually unseen. They can also sabotage the lighting in any room, the electricity in the entire fortress, and even the alarms. They can turn off the automatic sprinkler system and start fires, or employ any host of creative solutions. If they come up with something really good, go with it.

GAME MASTER NOTE

Successful Electrical Engineer or Surveillance Systems skill rolls are required to tap into the electrical or surveillance systems. Just chopping wires in two will have random effects (and *not* likely the desired result). Plus, a random act *may* alert the crooks to the group's presence. Basic Electronics is not quite sufficient to fully understand what's what, so there's a skill penalty of -25%. A failed roll will cause a random floor to lose its lights and power (roll a 20-sided die to determine which floor).

AFTER THEY ENTER THE DUCTS, READ THE FOLLOWING:

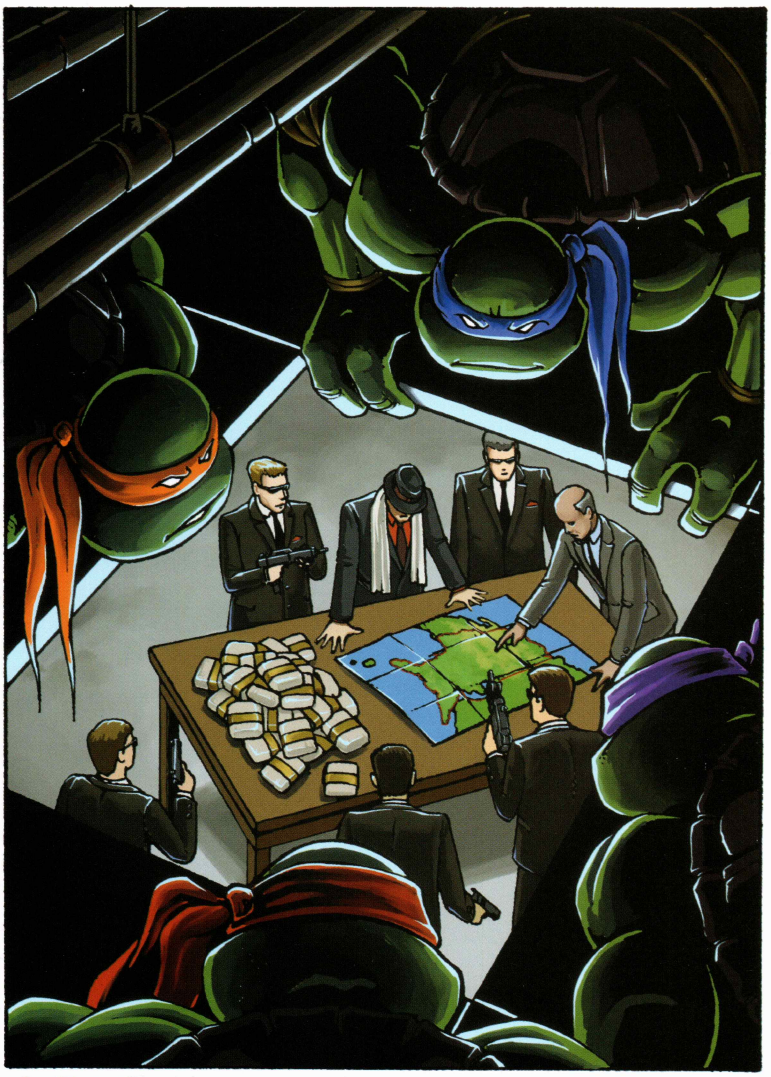
> The narrow, twisting air ducts empty into a cramped, two-foot-high crawlspace that stretches out on all sides for as far as you can see in the dim light. The crawlspace floor is made of flimsy tiles suspended from the ceiling with metal struts. The area is filled with electrical wiring, plumbing, sprinkler system machinery, and ventilation shafts.
>
> You hear murmuring voices directly below you, and thin streams of light shine up from cracks in the flimsy tiles below your feet.

If the players have an instantaneous reaction, let them do it. Otherwise, continue:

> You suddenly realize that you are in the drop ceiling above the labs. The crawlspace "floor" is made of lightweight ceiling tiles suspended below the roof of the building. The two-foot gap between the real ceiling and the drop ceiling is just enough room for human-size or smaller characters to travel freely.

If the heroes lift up the corner of a ceiling tile, they can see into the room below without being spotted. The air duct ended over the *Animal Experimentation Chamber (1),* so if they look down now, read that room description to them.

The heroes can visit all the rooms on the top floor by traveling in the narrow crawlspace. They can pop out of the crawlspace at any point they choose, in any of the five areas described. They can



then leap back up into the crawlspace and travel to another room in the penthouse without being seen. Of course, if seen, they can be pursued or the villains can shoot blindly through the ceiling panels (-10 to strike).

To find the drug lab, they can travel around, peering down into rooms, or they can follow special ventilation pipes. The lab produces heavy-duty chemical fumes which must be routed to chimneys on the roof. The lab also consumes far more power than the other areas. If they think of following the main pipes and wiring in the crawlspace, they will be led directly to the drug lab.

GAME MASTER NOTE

If the players are not running the Ninja Turtles, check to see if their characters fit in the crawlspace. Mutant animals that are Size Level 10-15 suffer a -20% to Prowl rolls, and those Size 16 and above can't move in the crawlspace at all; they must drop through into the *Animal Experimentation Chamber (1)*, or be forced to use the stairs, which are guarded.

MOVING ALONG THE DROP CEILING

Moving in the crawl space requires a successful Prowl roll and Climbing roll to do so quietly.

Failing the Prowl roll means that the character has made too much noise moving, and is detected by the people on the 20th floor if they make a Perception skill roll (Perception: 50%). If so a SoloChem goon alerts that floor's security team and goes to investigate in 1-3 combat rounds. Standing on a chair, he lifts the ceiling tile and pokes his head and gun into the crawlspace where the noise seemed to have come from.

Failing the Climb roll means the unfortunate individual has not stepped on the iron strut, but has accidentally put their weight on one of the flimsy ceiling tiles. They crash *through* the tiles and fall into the room below. The tiles cannot support more than 20 pounds and even the iron struts can only hold about 500 pounds per six-foot area.

A successful Jumping roll or Roll with Impact allows the falling person to hold onto the drop ceiling framework and not fall all the way to the floor. Falling to the floor does 1D6 damage.

ATTACKING FROM THE DROP CEILING

The heroes can attack from the drop ceiling by hurling or firing from their hiding place. Or they can lean out of the ceiling and bop the people below with long weapons. Swords, nunchaku, and bo staffs are long enough, sais are not. They can also quietly slide a ceiling panel away and drop to the floor. This *surprise* attack always gives the heroes the Initiative and first strike.

THE SOLOCHEM PENTHOUSE

The 20th floor of the SoloChem fortress is the only part of the building involved in criminal activity. The rest of the building is involved in legitimate business.

The doors in the penthouse are heavy-duty security doors (200 SDC). If the heroes jam a door shut, it will take the goons 4 rounds (1 minute) to break it down.

ALERT!

If the building goes on *Alert*, an alarm sounds. Tell the players they hear a loud alarm, and then make loud "Woop Woop" noises to simulate it. Do this periodically through the episode to remind the players, and to build a general mood of panic.

During the *Alert*, subtract 20% from all Prowl rolls. The security Dispatcher will send teams of Typical Goons to the trouble spots. They arrive 1D6 rounds after the intruders are spotted in any of the five Penthouse areas. The Dispatcher stays in the office area. If he is incapacitated, he can no longer send Goons to hot spots, and the group won't have to fight extra thugs.

If the characters lie low and remain hidden for two hours, the alert will be canceled.

If the lab or other major property is destroyed, or if the penthouse seems to be under a major assault, the Boss will try to get to his helicopter. He will be escorted by two Goon bodyguards. *See Crime Boss Escape attempt.*

GAME MASTER NOTE

Characters with extraordinary abilities like psionics, invisibility, teleport, etc. may be able to breeze through the SoloChem fortress. To give them some opposition, add some motion sensors and electric eyes with silent alarms. Once the dispatcher has had

time to realize they are under attack by uncanny opponents, he instruct the goons to act accordingly. For example: the goons track an invisible character with the aid of motion sensors, and spray the room he's in with a fire extinguisher so that the foam will cover his body, making him visible, etc.

SOLOCHEM PENTHOUSE ROOM DESCRIPTIONS:

1) ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION CHAMBER:

Along the walls are racks of cages filled with pathetic, whimpering animals. Many of them look horribly mutated, and some are dead.

Three technicians in lab coats bustle about, administering strange drug injections to the frightened rats, lizards, rabbits, cats, and guinea pigs.

This is where *Labb Ratt* and his wicked crew were bred. The four large cages they were in are now empty.

Mutant animal characters may be offended enough by the horrible experiments to free the animals. If they release the animals through the building, the fortress goes on Alert, but all goon patrols are halved, as half the goons are busy rounding up the animals.

Award 50 XP for freeing the animals, and 75 XP for freeing them to create a diversion.

2) DRUG LAB:

This chamber is a massive research and production facility, fully stocked with a tremendous variety of chemicals. Amidst the clutter are large, three-foot long, sealed storage tanks with labels like "Sodium Nitrate," "Sulfuric Acid," and "Hydrochloric Acid." Dozens of strange chemical compounds bubble in glass beakers set over Bunsen burners.

Three shifty-eyed scientists cook up strange drugs under the watchful eyes of four guards. Strange ice-blue crystalline flakes pour out of a strange processing machine, and are sealed in foot-long blue plastic bags, which are placed on a large cart and wheeled out of the room by two of the goons.

The Drug Lab is one of the heroes' targets. The group can attack it and sabotage the production machine by making a Mechanical Engineering roll, or by doing 100 points of SDC damage to it.

The bags of Blue Ice are being wheeled into the *Drug Storage Room (3).* If the scientists see the intruders, they will gasp, clean their glasses, take another look, and say, "Are you one of ours?" If the intruders ask them what they mean, refer to the section on interrogating the scientists, which follows.

If the heroes are really clever, they may steal a tank of Sulfuric Acid to disintegrate the Blue Ice. There's enough acid in one tank to do the job completely.

3) DRUG STORAGE ROOM:

This area is filled with racks of carefully sealed blue plastic bags. Five goons shuffle around, shifting from foot to foot in an agitated manner.

Yep, this is it; the Blue Ice room. There is 16 million dollars worth of narcotics here. There's only one way in or out of this room; the door to the Drug Lab.

DESTROYING THE BLUE ICE

The Blue Ice can be destroyed by being burned (75 Experience Points), immersed in acid from the Drug Lab (200 Experience Points), or flushed into the sewers (50 Experience Points).

For other forms of destruction, award Experience Points based on these guidelines. Burning it and flushing it into the sewers are the worst solutions, since the drugs could still contaminate innocents. Dissolving it in acid is best, because it renders the nasty stuff inert.

The characters can even hook an acid tank up to the sprinkler system in this room, and destroy the Blue Ice from a distance. This solution is worth 250 Experience Points, but also requires some time (2D4 minutes) and at least the *Basic Mechanics* skill.

If the group manages to destroy the drugs without raising the fortress' attention, the destruction of the Blue Ice sets off special sensors, putting the building on *Alert.*

4) OFFICE SUITE:

The offices are furnished in expensive Italian leather and design. Except for the five scowling goons that slouch in the corners of the rooms, they look like any other offices.

A burly man in a dirty trench coat sits at one desk, barking orders into a walkie-talkie; if the player characters stop and listen to the radio man, they hear him say, "Alright, ya mugs, send squad Delta-17 to replace squad Alpha-2. An' don't waste any time, or I'll kick yer butts." If the building is on *Alert,* he adds, "All squads, get on the horn the second ya see 'em, or I'll kick yer butts! I wanna know about it the second ya see those... those THINGS!" This is the security teams' Dispatcher. *See SoloChem NPC Villains.*

In addition to the dispatcher, there is some incriminating evidence here. The evidence is in the form of files; account books, shipping manifests, and financial logs which detail SoloChem's illicit operations. The heroes don't need the files to bust SoloChem, but getting them before they can be destroyed could help the police secure a conviction and make it stick.

The group will be tipped off about the documents as one of the goons finishes tossing a file folder into a large wall safe and slams it shut. Staying to get the evidence is risky as 2D4+1 goons will arrive within a minute. If the group stays, they will draw additional attention and attacks. Such bravery and conviction should get them each an extra 100 Experience Points (especially if the opponents are tough). The safe has an SDC of 800 and is fireproof. The combination is tough; -20% to Pick Locks rolls.

5) HIGH-TECH LAB:

This lab looks much more sophisticated than the other lab. It's filled with futuristic technical gadgets which crackle with energy. Four technicians bustle about the room, wearing ill-fitting Nuclear-Biological-Chemical (N.B.C.) suits that cover their faces and bodies completely. There are also four goons in the room, looking agitated, as if they fear being here without protective suits.

This is Labb Ratt's lab. The four techs are members of the Ratt Pak. (Brain Drain is currently inside one of the machines, and is not visible.) The Ratt Pak are wearing N.B.C. suits not because of

any dangerous chemicals, but because the goons don't know they are mutated animals, and would be freaked out to see them.

Characters with an Electrical Engineering skill or science background will realize that the High-Tech Lab has nothing to do with drugs. A thorough inspection, taking at least 20 minutes, shows that the lab is researching methods to deliver hypnotic subliminal messages by electronic transmission.

Since the characters don't know of *Labb Ratt's* plan (or even his existence), it's unlikely they'll attack here. They are more likely to bypass this and attack the Blue Ice room.

GAME MASTER NOTE

If the heroes *do* attack, the four villains pretend to be frightened technicians and huddle in a corner, pleading not to be hurt. If the heroes leave them alone they just run off and disappear (escape). If the heroes try to restrain them, remove their gear, or attack them personally (not the goons), the four lash out (they have the element of surprise and attack first).

Brain Drain sets off automated defenses in the room: *five robot guns* on swivel mounts rise up from the floor and fire at the heroes (+4 to hit, 3D6 damage). Note that in this encounter the Ratt Pak are at full power, and could trash the Turtles or most heroes in an extended fight. Fortunately, they have no desire to fight and instead use the goons and defenses to cover their escape.

A huge chunk of machinery transforms into a small rocket, and the four technicians (really the Ratt Pak) leap into the rocket while the heroes are occupied with the defenses and goons. The rocket blasts off, tearing a hole in the roof, and flies away at 300 miles (483 km) per hour, and gaining speed every second.

If the heroes have flight or have other extraordinary abilities, the rocket quickly reaches a speed of Mach Two, and can quickly outdistance virtually any character. It has 600 SDC.

The Ratt Pak will only use their powers to get away. Remember that our heroes have not seen what the Pak looks like, but the Ratt Pak has now seen them (while wearing N.B.C. gear costume).

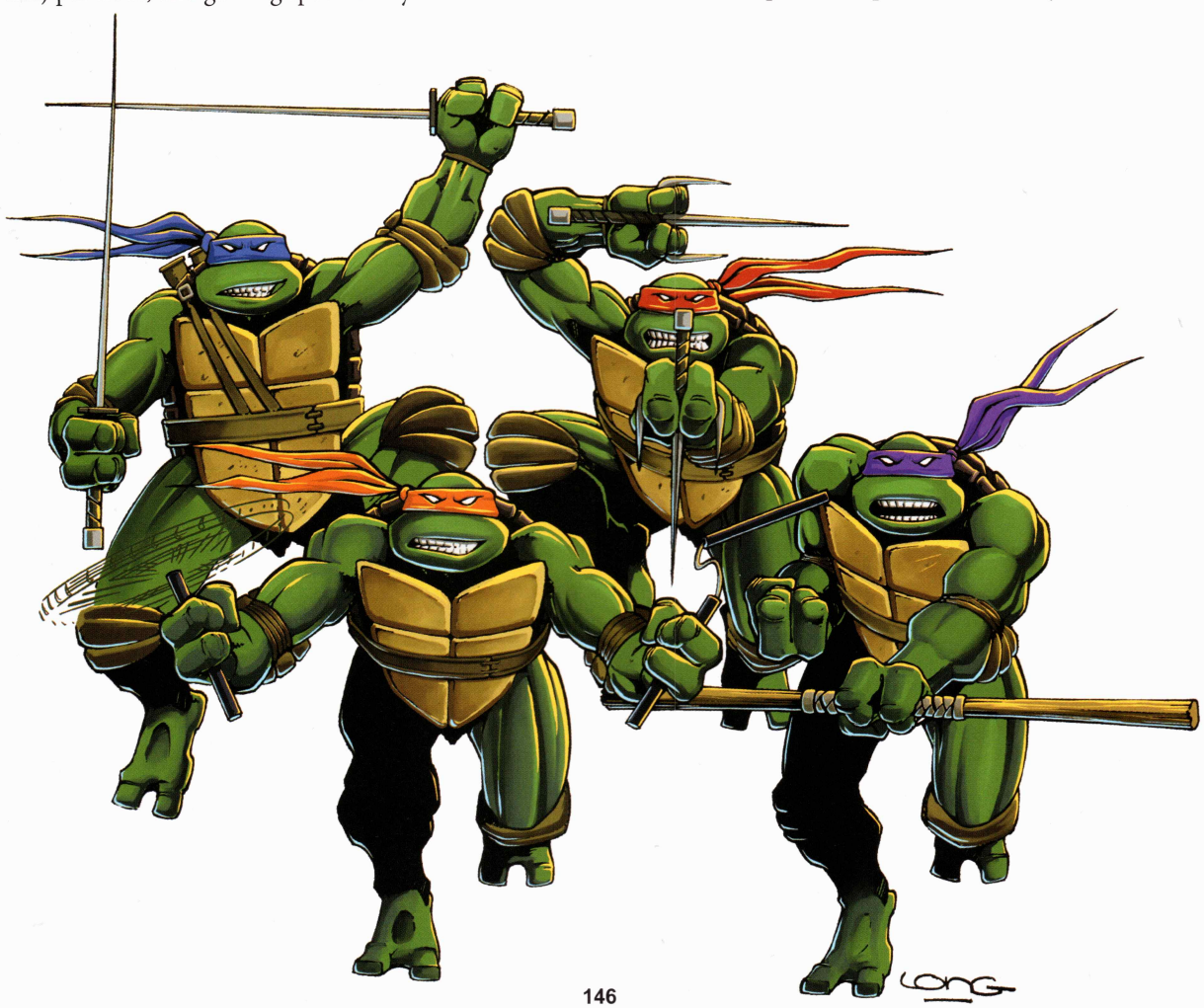
INTERROGATING SOLOCHEM PEOPLE

Everyone in the penthouse is involved in the criminal manufacturing and distribution of the Blue Ice and knows where it is stored. If interrogated, they explain the layout of the building, where the drugs are, how the Alert works, and the fact that the goon squads depend on the dispatcher to send them to hot spots.

In addition, the heroes can find out the following information by interrogating the following people:

Goons: The goons are hired muscle. They know the building manufactures drugs, but do not know about the Ratt Pak. They do know that something weird is going on in the High-Tech Lab, but they don't know what it is. They are a security force and are told not to think or question orders. Consequently, they will fight until subdued or clearly overpowered.

Techs: The technicians are a nasty bunch of techno-dweebs. They know about the Ratt Pak - since they created them. They also fear the mutant animals, since Labb Ratt is far more intelligent than they are. They will reveal information about the drugs, the labs, and the crime boss, but will avoid telling too much about the Ratt Pak, especially that they created them or that they are mutants and possess super abilities. They offer little resistance.



Ratt Pak: If any of the Ratt Pak are captured, they refuse to answer questions, and will just make threats. *See Loose Ends for more on the Pak.*

The Dispatcher: The Dispatcher knows about Labb Ratt, and knows he is working on a secret plan for the Crime Boss, but he doesn't know what it is. He's the head of security, nothing more. But this makes him tough and dangerous. *See NPC stats.*

Office Workers: The office workers know all about the drug operation, but know nothing of Labb Ratt, the Ratt Pak, or mutant animals. They're flunkies who answer to crime boss Frederick Porcelain. They offer no resistance, but may try to run away.

Anyone else in building: The rest of the people in the SoloChem building know nothing of the Blue Ice, and think that SoloChem is a completely legitimate business. These innocent bystanders are found only on floors 1-19.

The Crime Boss: *See The Crime Boss Escape, below.*

ESCAPING THE FORTRESS

THE CRIME BOSS ESCAPE

If the assault is successful in destroying the Blue Ice, the SoloChem Crime Boss, Frederick Porcelain, reluctantly decides to destroy the records of his operation and escape before the police arrive.

He sends two of his goons to shred the files in the *Office Suite,* and another two goons to warm up the helicopter on the roof. Meanwhile, he grabs a suitcase bulging with $500,000 in cash (this week's unbanked profits) and escapes to the roof.

If our heroes are escaping the fortress at the same time, they see the Crime Boss, accompanied by two bodyguards, running for the helicopter. They can easily intervene and catch him if they want to. Both the Goons and the Crime Boss can fly the chopper, so even if the goons are captured, the Boss will try to escape.

If the good guys stayed in the building after they destroyed the Blue Ice, they overhear a voice on a walkie-talkie saying, "Get da boss to da roof! Keep him safe till he can get there! Move!" This should inspire them to drop what they are doing and get him. (This can also be used to distract our heroes, allowing the Ratt Pak to escape.)

THE DASH TO THE ROOF

If the heroes drop what they're doing and go to the roof immediately, they arrive as the crime boss reaches the helicopter. They have 4 rounds to stop him before his helicopter leaves. Of course, if they thought to sabotage the helicopter before, they have all the time they want as the pilot fumbles with the uncooperative controls. If they catch him, they can interrogate him.

INTERROGATING FREDERICK PORCELAIN, CRIME BOSS:

If the Crime Boss is caught by mutant animals or strange-looking heroes, he freaks out, shouting:

> "Oh no! I didn't create you! I swear! You're not my fault! I didn't use no turtles (or whatever the heroes look like) as lab animals! I swear!"

If the Ratt Pak was not seen, these hysterics tip our heroes that there is more going on here than they thought.

Once calmed down, Porcelain spills everything he knows. He reveals the existence of the Ratt Pak, admits to creating them, and being in cahoots with them. He gets more and more hysterical as he speaks.

READ THE FOLLOWING CONFESSION:

> "I created those damn mutants by injecting lab animals with some kind of mutation drugs. I wanted to make animals that respond to my designer drugs like humans do. You would not believe how difficult it is to catch human subjects to experiment on.
>
> Anyway, I successfully mutated a rat, a lizard, a bunny, a cat, and um...a guinea pig brain. They mutated horribly and gained a frightening level of intelligence. Especially the guinea pig brain.
>
> They said they could create machines that could mind-control people. I gave 'em all the lab equipment they asked for, even though it was real expensive. They're nearly done with their Subliminal Message Generator now. But I don't trust 'em! I don't think they ever intended to give it to me. I bet they planned on taking over.
>
> I think they were gonna use that mind machine on all humans! They hate humans! I'm not the problem! They are! You gotta stop 'em before it's too late! Before it's too late for all of us!"

STAYING IN THE BUILDING

If the heroes don't immediately go to the roof, they will miss the Ratt Pak's escape, but they feel it as the rocket zooms away. If they did make it to the roof, Porcelain's confession is punctuated by it.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> The whole building suddenly shudders. A roaring noise pours from the High-Tech lab, and masonry topples down. Suddenly you feel the air vibrate and see a strange rocket hurtle off into the night sky.

The police arrive 1D6 minutes after the rocket blasts away or if somebody reports trouble at SoloChem (gunfire is trouble). If the heroes want to sneak out of the building quietly, they must make one final Prowl roll, and take off before the police cordon off the building. Two police helicopters arrive to circle the roof while dozens of police cars cordon off the area and a S.W.A.T. team storms the front doors downstairs.

GAME MASTER NOTE

After the Ratt Pak's getaway, the heroes can try questioning people before the police arrive. The characters are likely obvious mutants or vigilantes and should flee, because if they are seen they may be implicated as part of the drug ring! Depending on how things go, they may have to sneak, climb, or otherwise avoid the police to escape - if they fail they could be caught or attacked by the authorities. Only heroes known to work with law enforcement can stay for a formal police mop-up and investigation.

SOLOCHEM CHARACTERS

THE CRIME BOSS

Real Name: Frederick Porcelain

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 37 **SDC:** 20

Age: 43 **Sex:** Male **Size Level:** 8

Weight: 135 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 4 inches

Attributes: IQ 15, MA 15, ME 8, PS 10, PP 10, PE 12, PB 9, Spd 8

Experience Level: Sixth

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand. Four attacks per round.

Bonuses: None

Weapon Proficiencies: Automatic Pistol

Skills of Note: Pilot Automobile 55%, Pilot Helicopter (Basic), Chemistry, Analytical Chemistry, Math: Advanced, Computer Operation, and Computer Programming.

Weapons: Automatic Pistol

Armor: None

Vehicle: Helicopter (On Roof)

Personal Profile: The Crime Boss is a weaselly man with an annoying personality and a disdainful air. He set up the SoloChem empire and would sacrifice any of his men to keep it.

Although he created the Ratt Pak, the Crime Boss, like Dr. Frankenstein, is now terrified of his creation.

When the mutant animals proposed they would create a subliminal message generator, Mr. Porcelain was pleased. But now he's afraid the animals are out of his control. He's scared of Labb Ratt and his crew, and would gladly betray them if he thought he could do so without endangering himself - especially if this *important* information enables him to cut a deal with the district attorney (he might even get immunity and walk away from all this a free man). Frederick Porcelain is 100% sleazy.

THE DISPATCHER

Real Name: Donald Taglione

Alignment: Aberrant

Hit Points: 25 **SDC:** 38

Age: 36 **Sex:** Male **Size Level:** 13

Weight: 270 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 8 inches

Attributes: IQ 12, MA 17, ME 8, PS 16, PP 10, PE 16, PB 7, Spd 8

Experience Level: Fifth

Combat Skills: Expert Hand to Hand. Four attacks per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Strike, +3 to Parry and Dodge, +2 to melee Damage, +2 to Pull Punch/Roll, Kick attack (1D6 damage).

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Knife, WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun, WP Shotgun, WP Rifle, WP Heavy.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 72%, Body Building, Radio, Surveillance, Basic Electronics, Basic Mechanics, and Pick Locks.

Weapons: Shotgun (5D6 damage), knife (1D6 damage), and a 9mm Pistol concealed in an ankle holster (2D6 damage).

Armor: None

Vehicle: None

Personal Profile: The Dispatcher is a huge barrel of a man in a grubby trench coat and crumpled fedora. He carries a huge walkie-talkie, and is constantly barking orders into it.

He is in charge of security and coordinates the goon squads. He regulates the goon patrols during times of calm, and dispatches squads to hot spots when the penthouse is on alert.

Note: The Dispatcher knows of the Ratt Pak's existence.

Sample dialogue: The Dispatcher's favorite phrase is *"I'll kick yer butt!"* and he barks it into his walkie-talkie all the time. If the heroes listen in on a walkie-talkie, they hear him constantly shouting things like:

"Squad Gamma-7, report to the lobby to relieve squad Delta-2. Do it now, or I'll kick yer butts!"

"Squad Beta-3, report in. Where are you guys? You want me ta kick yer butts?"

Once the building goes on *Alert*, he gets more frantic:

"Squad Beta-57, get yer carcasses over to the lab on the double! Hurry up, or I'll kick yer lazy butts! And where's squad Alpha-2? Report in or I'll kick yer butts!"

TYPICAL GOON - SOLOCHEM

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 18 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 25 **Sex:** Male **Size Level:** 10

Weight: 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 10 inches

Attributes: IQ 9, MA 6, ME 5, PS 15, PP 13, PE 12, PB 9, Spd 12

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand. Two attacks per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Parry and Dodge. +2 to pull punch.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Knife, WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun, WP Shotgun, WP Rifle.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 72%, Body Building.

Weapons: 9mm Pistol (2D6 damage) or Uzi (3D6 damage). All carry a knife too (1D6 damage).

Armor: None

Vehicle: None

Personal Profile: These thugs are specially recruited by the SoloChem Corp as cannon fodder. They wear neatly pressed suits and expensive jewelry. Many wear dark glasses indoors and at night. They each carry a walkie-talkie with headphones.

They all have I.D. badges with the SoloChem logo. The I.D. badge will be useless to the Ninja Turtles or mutant animals unless they have fantastic disguise skills.

Goons are paid very well, and are a gung-ho, motivated bunch, ready to defend the fortress at all costs. (If they survive five years of goon training, they are promoted to a management job, where the fatality rate is a lot lower.)

They are not stupid, but they aren't too clever either, and can easily be tricked into charging off in the wrong direction.

They fight until the police arrive. After that, they flee to avoid arrest.

Note: No goon is aware the lab created mutant animals. They have not seen the Ratt Pak, and would be startled to see them.

WHAT NEXT?

If the players are on their toes, they'll try to find out the Ratt Pak's destination, and their scheme. If they are asleep at the wheel, they'll let the whole matter drop. Either way, you can keep the scenario moving forward.

The heroes can find out the following information by searching the High-Tech Lab for information, or by continuing to interrogate the Crime Boss about the Ratt Pak (25 XP award).

If they do neither, they will read the following information in the tabloids the day after the raid (No XP award). Legitimate newspapers don't believe in mutant creatures, and they don't print the weird ravings of Porcelain. But the cheap tabloids do. Ad-lib the newspaper story so that all the information below is revealed.

CLUES AND INFORMATION:

1. The Ratt Pak took a nearly completed prototype of a Subliminal Message Generator; a device capable of mind-controlling huge numbers of people. The prototype only needs another week's work to be functional.
2. The Subliminal Message Generator (SMG) works only when the subjects stare at SMG-encoded images for at least an hour. The messages need to be encoded into a delivery system, like video. The generator is nearly finished. The Ratt Pak just has to work out a few bugs and the system will be ready.
3. The Ratt Pak needs a *constant* supply of the mutagenic drugs that created them to stay mutated. The drugs are rare, expensive, and illegal. The only source of the drugs is the *Magaldi Cartel* in South America.

If the characters investigate the rocket launch by contacting police, news agencies, or even the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration), they learn the rocket was tracked to Southern California. The officials lost track of it over the Hollywood Hills. If not, the news agencies will announce unconfirmed reports that this "mystery rocket" was tracked to California.

The sleazy tabloids report that a rocket-shaped UFO was seen landing in the Hollywood Hills late at night, six hours after the SoloChem raid. The tabloid articles link the crash to the unauthorized launch at SoloChem.

GAME MASTER NOTE

LOOSE ENDS

If one of the Ratt Pak is actually captured (which shouldn't happen), allow a brief period of interrogation, and then improvise an assault by some Brain Drain robots on the place the mutant is kept. The Ratt Pak member can escape in the confusion. If the player characters actually repulse the attack, yield to the situation, and run upcoming encounters with one less member of the Ratt Pak. Remember, no member of the Pak will fink on their pals. Psionic probes *may* reveal the following:

- A *general* idea of who and what the other gang members are (no specific data like hit points or exact abilities).
- They run a major drug ring in Hollywood, California.
- Plans for using the SMG soon with... a film... or something... in California.
- An impression of evil, big danger, and... The Shredder (?!).

REEL 2: I LOVE L.A.

CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME!

In this episode, our crusaders go to L.A., meet some friendly surfers, battle Foot Frogmen, and meet one member of the Ratt Pak. Not bad for a weekend in the sun.

MOTIVATIONS FOR CRUISING

This episode begins with the Turtles planning their next move. The previous skirmish with the SoloChem crime boss has led to the discovery of Labb Ratt and his cronies. Further investigation will confirm the existence of the *Subliminal Message Generator* (SMG), and confirm that Labb Ratt and crew are continuing their operations in Hollywood.

The heroes should have all the available clues and know they are *needed* in Hollywood. Further information and incentives can be made available through any police connections they may have or from the media. This is a very grave situation which threatens thousands of innocent people.

The media aspect regarding clues and incentives focuses on the front page news about the unfortunate businessman and suspected drug lord, Mr. Frederick Porcelain. Mr. Porcelain has made a special deal with the district attorney's office. He claims to have been a victim of maniacal mutant animals who were the actual criminals behind the entire drug operation. Mr. Porcelain is being held under protective police custody until the criminal mutants can be apprehended and brought to trial. In exchange for his full cooperation, Mr. Porcelain will plead guilty to lesser charges of criminal negligence. His company will be fined and Porcelain may have to serve as much as four years in prison (up for parole in two). Although Frederick is getting off pretty easy, the real danger is the *Ratt Pak*. Our heroes can check in on him later.

The information from the media is nothing more than what was revealed as available data in the *Reel 1* adventure. Likewise, any police sources will only have the same basic info that the characters may already know. There just isn't much known about these villains. However, the police will confirm that they are currently in the Los Angeles area and that the situation is extremely serious. There is an all-points manhunt for the creatures. Rumor has it that the Feds may be involved in the manhunt too. This is good, but it is likely to make moving around town a little more difficult for mutant animal heroes, especially those who are rodents and cats.

GAME MASTER INFORMATION

PICKING UP FROM TRUCKIN' TURTLES

If players are being run through this after the adventures in **Truckin' Turtles**, they will already be in California. This being the case, the first adventure should take place somewhere in *California* or a neighboring state. As for police connections, the group has good ol' Bert McClusky. Bert can help gather information and might even join his pals to "Git rid of drug-running vermin like these guys." Whether Bert is used as an NPC is strictly up to the Game Master, but we thought we'd mention it.

MARCHING ORDERS

If playing the TMNT, the following section involves Splinter, the Turtles' master and mentor.

If playing original heroes, it will be their mentor or head of operations who delivers the speech and sends them off to California. If they have no mentor, and are not rushing to go to California, improvise. Use whatever channels of information the heroes use to convey the fact that they are needed in Hollywood. For example, a psionic character could have a precognitive dream about the Ratt Pak. Or the TV news could show footage of one of the Ratt Pak evading a police raid. And so on...

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

You are relaxing at home after the battle at the SoloChem fortress. Splinter enters the room and summons you before him. Looking pleased, he says:

"My sons, you have proven yourselves honorably in your assault on the poison merchants. The world has seen the end of the Blue Ice menace before it could begin. This is one narcotic that will not plague the innocent any time soon. I am proud of you.

"But a new evil has been uncovered. In shutting down this vipers' den, you have discovered the existence of a band of horribly mutated laboratory creatures who are filled with evil. It disturbs me greatly. I want you to find these creatures.

"We must know the truth. If Porcelain is to be believed, these animals are extremely cunning and dangerous. If, on the other hand, they are innocent victims of Porcelain's hideous experiments, we might be able to help them."

Give the heroes a chance to react to this. They may be excited, sorry to leave their home, or something else entirely. No doubt they will have a lot of questions like, "How do we find these guys?" Their mentor has the answers:

"You shall begin your search for them in California, in the city called Los Angeles. Trace the creatures through the Magaldi Cartel that Porcelain has spoken of.

"I cannot go with you, but I will help you on your odyssey. I will arrange your flight, provide you with expense money, and advise you from our home here in New York. Call every day, if you wish, to inform me of your progress.

"But the hard part is up to you. This is a difficult assignment: you must remain hidden from the eyes of the world and still find these mutants. In your travels you may meet people you can trust with the secret of our existence, but it is essential that we remain unknown to the world at large.

"I have the utmost faith that you will be able to find these creatures, and work out what to do with them. Your ninja training will help you ferret them out, even if they are in hiding, and your wisdom will advise your actions.

"I believe I have trained you well. Consider this a test of your resources."

The heroes are now in over their heads. Give them time to make preparations. Ask them what equipment they are taking. They may wish to travel light, or take a lot of special gear.

If playing the Turtles, the heroes should also bundle up and disguise themselves. Splinter gives them enough spending cash to cover reasonable expenses once in L.A. (about $2000 total).

Non-Turtle characters may have other means of transportation available to them. Characters who look comparatively normal can fly on a regular passenger airplane, take the train, or ride a bus. Some may even be able to fly there themselves. Non-human characters who wish to remain anonymous will have to make special, less conspicuous arrangements, like the TMNT, and may be forced to drive.

MUTANTS IN DISGUISE

In much of this adventure, our mutant animal heroes must pass unnoticed in human society. To escape detection under normal circumstances, the characters must conceal their inhuman nature. One way is to wear clothing that will hide most of the body or face and other odd features. Another ploy is to travel during the night and early morning hours when there are few, if any, pedestrians out. Creatures like the Ninja Turtles have an especially difficult time at disguise because of their bulk, color, odd two-fingered hands, and turtle shell. However, other mutant characters may look so close to humans that they can easily disguise themselves with make-up and a wig. The disguise skill will be handy for these individuals. **Note:** Michelangelo has a disguise skill which he uses to help disguise himself and his brothers.

Now, everything isn't as bleak as it may sound. This is the film capital of the world, as well as being one of the largest and most sophisticated cities in the United States. This can work to the characters' advantage. Hollywood film companies and advertising agencies are constantly staging publicity stunts and appearances, so even if something as bizarre as humanoid turtles are seen, people are not likely to see them as anything more than actors in costumes.

L.A. ARRIVAL

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Our heroes arrive in sunny Los Angeles on a beautiful, balmy afternoon. After living in a huge, dank, and grey eastern city like New York City for so long, L.A. looks unbelievably bright and sunny (especially compared to winter back home). The buildings are generally smaller and less imposing than those of New York. Los Angeles and surrounding communities are much more sprawling than the compressed humanity of Manhattan. The architecture is also very different. Buildings are an unusual mix of Spanish and Modern. Many are in colors of mauve and pink, others, gold

and red, white and blue. The whole city looks well-scrubbed and splashed with bright colors. Only the taint of a pollution-filled sky and human despair stains the glamour and sparkle of L.A.

The mutants need a base of operations. They can live on the beach, or in an abandoned building, or get a hotel room, or rent a beach house. **Note:** Los Angeles does *not* have the big storm drain type sewers found in eastern cities. The city has a system of aqueducts that look very much like an empty highway. These canal-like structures do not run throughout the entire city like sewers do and are often quite visible (and often without water).

FINDING THE RATT PAK!

There is a lot that a self-motivated group can do to locate the Ratt Pak. Let the players come up with their own method. Here are some possibilities:

1) GO TO THE CRASH SITE

The characters can investigate the crash site of the Ratt Pak's rocket in the Hollywood Hills. If they do, they will find a deep crater marked off with police tape. If they search the crater, they will find fragments of the rocket.

A successful Mechanical Engineering skill roll reveals that the rocket was intentionally blown up after landing, and did not crash (the Ratt Pak blew it up to keep people from discovering it).

Also in the wreckage is a burnt fragment of a piece of paper missed by the police. In twisted, scrawled handwriting, it says: "Magaldi Cartel Safehouse, 54001 Melrose Ave, L.A."

If the group stakes-out the address, they'll discover that it is a safehouse for gangland members of the Magaldi Cartel. Currently, three men occupy the house. Nobody comes to visit and nobody leaves the home. If the heroes enter the house or bug the building, they will learn only that the three are crooks on the lam. Strong-arming the thugs for info will result in a brief moment of combat. The thugs do not use firearms for fear of alerting the police and instead fight with knives, brass knuckles, and clubs. They surrender as soon as they realize their opponents are much tougher than they are. The three are equal to a Typical Goon.

Unfortunately, they know little about the Ratt Pak other than that they work for the *Magaldi Cartel,* "and you don't want to mess with them, brother. They cut you up into little pieces before you know what hit you."

They will reveal one more bit of data. The leader of the Ratt Pack is a "dude named *Labb Ratt*... he's a drug dealer... and mean from what we hear on the street. Maybe you hero-dudes should jus' go home now and make things easy on yerselfs."

If the three thugs are not incapacitated, they will contact someone at the Cartel and warn them that "...some strange dudes are looking for the Ratt Pak. Get word on the street." If our heroes exhibited any unusual abilities or characteristics, they are also carefully reported.

2) ROUGH UP MAGALDI'S DRUG DEALERS

Our crime fighters will get similar comments from drug dealers and gang members who work the streets for the Cartel. They may also get the address to the safehouse (but this is basically a dead end). Asking too many questions about the Magaldi Cartel or the Ratt Pak will definitely get the attention of the people in question. This attention will be dramatically intensified if our heroes are destroying the drugs, drug houses, or incapacitating drug dealers (by beating them up or turning them over to the police).

All this attention is likely to get the heroes attacked by thugs or gang members (all equal to a Typical Goon), or shot at by a speeding car. If these scare tactics don't dissuade our champions, then more serious measures will be taken (like an assault by Foot ninja, a hitman, hired super-villain, etc.).

GAME MASTER NOTE

You can turn this Ratt Pak and drug cartel situation into a long-running campaign if you wish. Develop the situation and characters involved (allies and enemies) as much or as little as you like, so that the plot threads continue on long after the main plot for **Turtles Go Hollywood!** is wrapped up.

3) RIVAL DRUG DEALERS

If approached with a little diplomacy, one of the rival drug dealers may be of greater service. They would like to see Labb Ratt off the street, because he's cutting into profits. "It just good for business, man."

The rival dealer will supply a little more information about the Ratt Pak members too. "Labb Ratt is the brains. Don't give this guy any slack, 'cause he'll kill ya in a heartbeat an' do it wit a smile. The other guy to watch out for is White Rabbit. This dude's a psycho. Dresses up like a giant bunny rabbit in a leather mask, but he's all muscle and bullets, man. They say he can't be beaten. I heard tell 'bout an enforcer - Lizard something (Lounge Lizard) - heard he gots mind powers. There's Ratt's lady too, but she's just some ditzy broad."

Lastly, the criminal knows the day and place of "...an important shipment..." that the Ratt Pak must receive *(see 'A shipping manifest' under the Hacking data that follows for details).*

GAME MASTER NOTE

You could even have the rival drug dealer give the heroes the address to a warehouse that's known to be a drug drop point recently used by the Ratt Pak. Of course, Labb Ratt has anticipated this location being discovered (it is too well known), so he's moved operations elsewhere. However, he's left a welcoming party for anybody who comes snooping around. Trap Time! It could be a ninja assassin, or hired gunmen, or killer robots, or goons and White Rabbit (who slips away to fight again)... or you decide.

4) HACKING THE MAGALDI COMPUTERS

The good guys could rent or buy a computer (or get access to one), and try to hack into the Magaldi Cartel computer network. This requires 2D6 hours of computer work, a successful Computer Operation roll to locate the network online, and two out of three Computer Programming skill rolls to penetrate the Magaldi Cartel computers.

Cracking their network reveals three important pieces of data to our heroes:

- **An encrypted file** titled "RATT."
- **A series of invoices** for microchips and other high-end electronics hardware (this is odd because it is so out of place for the Cartel. Give 25 extra XP for the first person to figure

out that these are components for building another Subliminal Message Generator).

- **A shipping manifest** regarding a delivery to a Malibu company called "L.P. Enterprises" and marked "Attention: Mr. L. Ratt." The date of delivery and location is also indicated. A quick investigation reveals there is no company called L.P. Enterprises registered in Malibu or Los Angeles.

The computer connection is broken before any more data can be retrieved. Further attempts to break into the Cartel's computer files are unsuccessful. The heroes got lucky this first time; they can *not* break into the mob's computer again.

GAME MASTER NOTE

Just so you know exactly what's going on here: the Ratt Pak has paid the Cartel a small fortune for a steady supply of the Magaldi Cartel's *mutagenic drugs* developed by Frederick Porcelain. The mutant criminals *must* have a constant supply of these drugs to retain their sentient and humanoid state. Without the drugs, they will slowly revert back to their animal form. *Only* the members of the Ratt Pak are aware of this! The Cartel has no idea why Labb Ratt wants these drugs, or how important they are to them.

THE SHIPMENT

The shipment is scheduled for delivery tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 p.m. The shipment is arriving by boat along the Malibu coast, at the *Malibu Surfrider St. Beach.* Mr. L. Ratt is scheduled to be there to pick up the delivery.

GAME MASTER NOTE

If the Ninja Turtles are being played and Donatello didn't hack the computer network, Splinter contacts them to say that April O'Neil (or one of her connections) has hacked into the Magaldi Cartel computers and found the information on the Ratt Pak's shipment. For groups playing original mutant animals, adjust this approach as necessary if the heroes get stuck and need some help.

TO MALIBU BEACH

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Malibu Beach is a serene stretch of coastline that extends for miles and miles. The soothing waves roll and break with a relaxing, gentle rhythm. But they don't have a calming effect on you. They make you wanna surf!
>
> There are only a few other surfers out showing off their style. And there is time to get surf gear together and plunge into the waves. It may also be a good idea to break the group up to cover more area.

The locals are a little too laid-back and wrapped up in their surfing to notice how different the Turtles or many other mutant animals might look. Even the Ninja Turtles will pass unnoticed as long as they wear some beach gear - they can pass for short guys in green body suits.

HANGING OUT ON THE BEACH

In addition to surfing, the characters can also hang out on the beach, and check out the locals. This particular stretch of beach seems unusually devoid of surfers and beach babes, perhaps because it is a weekday, and the weatherman threatens that an ocean storm is moving in. However, the sun is shining and the waves are inviting. The few dozen people on the beach all look like happy sun worshippers. Not one is really suspicious looking.

GAME MASTER NOTE

OPTIONAL RULES FOR SURFING

Yeah, it may not be the *wisest* thing to be surfing and goofing around considering the seriousness of the situation, but the characters have a few hours to wait so there is no harm in having a little fun. If the heroes are a happy-go-lucky group, the Game Master may quickly find himself with a bunch of amateur surfers on his hands. Encourage this kind of role-playing. The following rules allow the player characters to enjoy the thrill of the surf.

If the group doesn't have surfboards with them, they can rent some from a friendly gentleman near the road.

The art of surfing has a lot to do with physical prowess, balance, and courage. Of course, characters *must* know how to swim or

wear a life preserver (even then it's best if they know how to swim). The basics consist of paddling out to sea, waiting for a big wave, letting that wave grab hold of you, and standing up on your board while the wave carries you along (okay, maybe there's more to it in real life, but that's the basics here).

Natural athletes, like Ninja Turtles and other heroes, have an edge and may find they have a special affinity for this water sport.

SURFING - NEW OPTIONAL PHYSICAL SKILL

The base skill (without any instruction) is 20%.

Roll percentile dice: 1-20% means the individual has caught the wave and has his board under control. Roll again to see if the character can get to their feet and stand. A roll of 1-20 means success. Now roll once for every round (15 seconds) to stay standing. A failed roll, 21-00, means a WIPE OUT! Now aren't you glad you know how to swim?

Surfing Bonuses: Add the following bonuses to your character's base skill ability. Bonuses are cumulative.

+ 5% if the hero has either the Gymnastics *or* Acrobatics skill.

+15% if the character has *both* Gymnastics *and* Acrobatics.

+5% if a semi-pro or pro athlete with General Athletics skill.

+5% if they have the Advanced Swimming skill.

+10% if they use the *telekinesis* power for extra balance.

+10% if the mutant is adapted to swimming, like a mutant turtle or beaver.

+10% if the character knows any form of Martial Arts, including Ninjutsu, Kung-Fu, etc.

+5% per level of experience if the skill is selected as one of the character's *physical skills.*

Note: The TMNT each have the Swimming skill at 98%.

SURFING CHALLENGE

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Everything is quiet. There are no suspicious characters slinking in the shadows and everybody seems to be having a great time in the water. The suspected drug shipment isn't due for another hour or two (or three) and those waves and laughter sure are inviting.
>
> While you are standing around watching the fun, a skinny surfer with long, sun-bleached hair and a dimwitted, but friendly, expression walks over to you and says, "Hey li'l weird dudes. That's some wiiiiiiild wave ridin'! Wanna have a face-off? Yew know! A contest!"
>
> His four surfer buddies line up to show off their skills and to coax the group into a "li'l fun."
>
> The surfers propose four rounds of competition, with a surfer vs. "one of you weird dudes" in each round.

If our heroes agree, the first surfer asks the group for a volunteer to surf against him. Then the second, third, and fourth surfer will surf against another volunteer. The fourth player character faces the toughest opponent.

Compare Surfing skill rolls in each round. A failed roll means a wipeout. If both competitors fail their rolls, neither wins, and that round counts as a tie. If both competitors' rolls succeed, the winner is the one who made his Surf roll by the largest margin. If the heroes win two rounds and the surfers win two (or if both win just one), the match is a draw. The beach dudes have Surf skills of 50, 55, 60, and 65 respectively. Win or lose, the surfers are happy.

When they are done, the surfers say, "That was totally awesome, weird surfer dudes. Party on!"

They saunter away, waving and laughing.

FOOT FROGMEN ATTACK

The heroes can surf at their leisure till 2:30 p.m. At this time the storm is moving in and most of the surfers have gone. At about 2:45 p.m. a small boat appears above the waves, heading for the shore.

As the boat comes nearer, it can be seen to be a 40-foot yacht. Nothing too showy, but a sturdy and fast-looking vessel. As the yacht floats within 900 yards/meters of the beach, the heroes may notice six dark shapes bobbing in the water about half the distance to the boat with a successful vision-based Perception skill roll. Characters with advanced vision abilities or telescopic vision devices (like binoculars) can focus on the six shapes, identifying them as *frogmen.* However, the frogmen are not heading toward shore, but toward the boat.

If the heroes act now, they may be able to reach the yacht about the same time that the frogmen do, as the SCUBA divers seem to be waiting for the boat to come to them. If the group continues to watch, they see the frogmen carefully attach themselves to the slowly passing vessel and start to carefully climb toward the deck. Their movements show stealth and ninja skills. They are not expected visitors!

At this point, it is 2:55 pm and the yacht is about 600 yards/meters from shore. It's within easy surfing distance of the heroes, or a tough swim. If the group has a motorboat, they can get to the vessel the fastest (see below).

The six frogmen hop onto the deck and begin to make their way toward the pilot's area. Each is armed with a wicked-looking spear gun. One of the crewmen sees a frogman and pulls his pistol, but is cut down by a well-placed spear. Another falls victim to a knife blade before he can sound an alarm.

Yep, it's the Magaldi Cartel smuggling boat, but it is under attack from unknown assailants.

GAME MASTER NOTE

If our heroes head for the boat before the attack begins, inform the players that they may be able to reach the frogmen before they get to the yacht:

- **Swimming** takes at least 8 rounds (2 minutes) because they must battle the waves continually pushing them back to shore.
- **Paddling on surfboards** takes 6 rounds (a minute and a half).
- **A motorboat** gets them to the ship within a minute (4 rounds).
- **Alternative transportation methods** may be employed by the heroes, like flying, which could get them to the vessel in one round (15 seconds).

Unless they can travel the 600 yards/meters between the shore and the boat in six rounds, the frogmen reach the yacht, climb on board, and begin to kill the Magaldi henchmen. Once they have slain the five crewmen, they seize control of the boat and sail away. **Note:** The entire onboard attack takes approximately 10 rounds (2 1/2 minutes) unless the heroes intervene. The yacht then slowly turns around (another 4 rounds/one minute) and begins its way back to sea at a speed of 30 mph.

If the heroes were already in the water and 200 yards/meters from the shore when the frogmen first surface (say, if they were surfing), they have a chance to intercept the assailants before they even reach the boat (the frogmen wait about two minutes before they intercept and climb onto the yacht). Likewise, if the heroes have a motorboat or alternate means of transportation that's just as fast or faster, they can attack the frogmen before they reach the ship.

THE FIGHT IN THE WATER

If our waterlogged champions engage the frogmen in the water, the Magaldi Cartel henchmen on the yacht are not even likely to notice the combat only yards away. Characters who don't know how to swim are in danger of having their life preservers cut away and drowning. **Note:** The frogmen exhibit the speed and agility of martial artists. Indeed, they are ninja assassins sent by the *Shredder*. Each is armed with a knife (1D6 damage) and a spear gun (2D6 damage and takes one action to reload; four spears total). *See Foot Frogman, which follows.*

As if the appearance of the *Foot* was not enough trouble, our heroes also have to contend with a *Great White Shark*!

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> As you move toward the boat, you notice a strange motion in the water in front of you. A large fin cuts through the water, moving right toward you. With a savage ferocity, a great white shark erupts from the waves, hurtling directly toward you!

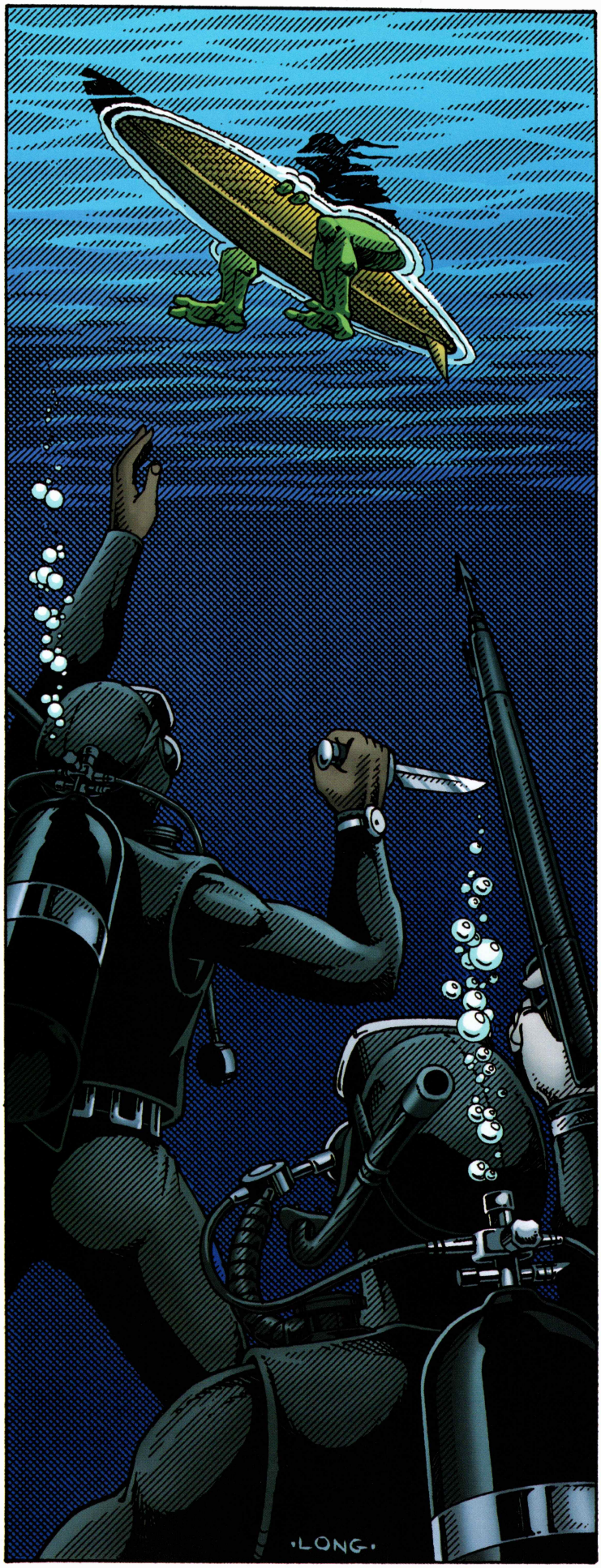
This may seem bad, but there's actually a lot the heroes can do. There's only one shark, so one person can fight it while the others rescue the ship. Also, if a character wants to try to vault over the shark and avoid its initial attack, they can do so with a successful Surfing roll, however failing the Surfing roll to vault over the shark gives the shark a +3 to Strike the character as its next action.

The shark has no loyalty to the Foot. It's just hungry. It will be glad to munch contentedly on a Foot Frogman if it can get one. If the shark is chasing one of our heroes, and the character zips behind a Foot Frogman, the shark will attack the more convenient frogman. Eating keeps the shark busy for 3D6 minutes.

THE BATTLE ON THE BOAT

The players may choose to engage the frogmen on the boat rather than in the ocean. The Cartel goons are grateful to see them, but do not engage in the fight - they simply watch, guns ready. Undoubtedly, one or two goons are likely to get shot by a spear gun, even with the intervention of our heroes.

If the heroes attack the goons as well as the frogmen, the goons angrily fight back, splitting their attacks between the Foot and the heroes.



DESPERATION RUN

When three of the six Foot frogmen are beaten, the one who has taken the least damage breaks off his attack (allowing those fighting him a parting shot, of course) to run below deck. He emerges two rounds later, clutching a large waterproof box, and runs for the edge of the boat. If not stopped, he reaches the edge and is in the water in one round. He does not defend himself, but just runs, even as he is being attacked. The box contains the Mutagenic drugs, and he will give his life to steal it.

If he makes it to the ocean, the heroes can follow him underwater up to a depth of 100 feet. Any deeper and they'll get the bends. They may have little chance of catching him if he gets this far. The Frogman swims at a Speed of 20.

GAME MASTER NOTE

Say, is that shark still hanging around?

WINNING THE BATTLE

If the Foot are beaten and the Magaldi Cartel goons subdued, the heroes have control of the boat and possession of the Mutagenic drugs.

Unless the Foot frogman successfully stole the waterproof box, a search of the ship turns up the Mutagenic drugs. The drugs can be destroyed or confiscated. Make a note of what is done with the Mutagenic chemicals. Also on board are six two-pound cases of other illegal drugs with a street value of about $50,000.

Any goons who survived can be interrogated. The goons are sullen and cranky, but grateful to have been rescued from the Foot. Here are some of their answers to questions:

1) WHY DID THE FOOT ATTACK YOU?

"I never seen those guys before. I dunno what they want wid' us. Maybe they're from a rival gang."

2) WHAT ARE THESE DRUGS?

"Some weird mutation stuff we make. Dese are the only guys dat want it. We usta' sell it to SoloChem, but dey recently hadda hostile takeover. I don't know what the stuff does. I jus' know it's radioactive, and I'd rather have nothin' ta do wid' it."

3) WHO WERE YOU GOING TO MEET?

"Dey said it would be some big furry guy. Dey said I would rec'anize him because he'd be wearin' winter clothes, and he'd say, 'Labb Ratt sent me.'"

4) WHERE IS YOUR HEADQUARTERS?

"In the jungles of Colombia, South America."

5) WHERE IS YOUR U.S.A. HEADQUARTERS?

"We ain't suppose ta hang 'round. But we got dis address of a safe place if we need it." The address is the safehouse that the characters already know about.

CARTEL AFTERMATH

The heroes can do as they wish with the captured Cartel goons, including leaving them for the police. There's enough evidence and illegal drugs to put them away for a long time.

FROM SHREDDER, WITH LOVE

Searching the Foot bodies (no Foot ninja will allow himself to be captured alive) yields little information. However, each body has an identical letter tucked inside the wet suit. It says:

> Dear Ratt Pak,
>
> I have your precious mutation drugs. I can and will intercept every other shipment as easily as I obtained this one. If you want your life sustaining chemicals, you will deal with me. All I want is your Subliminal Message Generator.
>
> And one more thing. I do not take kindly to mutant creatures. Perhaps you should think twice about being one.
>
> – The Shredder

Well, that should do the trick. Now the heroes know Shredder is involved.

ENTER WHITE RABBIT

White Rabbit has been watching all this from the shore, and is enraged because he is unable to swim and is deathly afraid of drowning. He is bundled up in hot, concealing clothes, and anxious for combat.

If the goons were interrogated, the heroes know someone could be waiting for them somewhere on the beach. If they are not privy to this info, White Rabbit's ambush will be a surprise. The only way to avoid his attack is to pilot the yacht to a different location miles away. Of course, this would mean abandoning the vehicles and equipment they came to the beach in.

Returning to the beach, the group sees only a handful of surfers lounging on the beach. A few more people are at the concession stand. There is also a hulking figure bundled in bulky winter clothing skulking in the shadows. Yes, this is *White Rabbit.*

White Rabbit makes his move as soon as the heroes are halfway up the beach. He throws off his winter clothing, shoots his submachine gun into the air, and grab a woman hostage.

Panting with rage, he shrieks: "Give me the package! Now! Or I'll waste her!" White Rabbit snarls and growls, "You creeps are ruining everything!"

The heroes may try to talk White Rabbit out of attacking, but he is berserk with anger and won't listen to reason. He wants the box now or people are going to die. Tell the players it is painfully obvious the mutant is on the edge and should not be pushed.

If White Rabbit is given the box of precious chemicals, he slowly backs away, still pulling the woman with him. "Don't follow me. Don't even move! I'll let her go as soon as I'm clear of you chumps." The hulking mutant would love to fight it out, but understands how important the drugs are and will not take any stupid chances. Once he's at the road he pushes the woman to the ground and leaps into a new, blue jeep.

The group will hear him shout, "Now Brain, now!" Suddenly, White Rabbit begins glowing, and in a flash, his body disappears. He is not invisible - he is definitely gone. Apparently, some sort of teleportation device has whisked the villain away.

GAME MASTER NOTE

The heroes can attempt to attack White Rabbit and pull the woman to safety. The ensuing battle is likely a deadly one as the evil rodent will fight to kill! If he is subdued or killed, his body is teleported away as soon as he is a few feet away from his assailants.

THE CLUE

The encounter yields another clue. A business card is found near where the hulking rabbit vanished, reading:

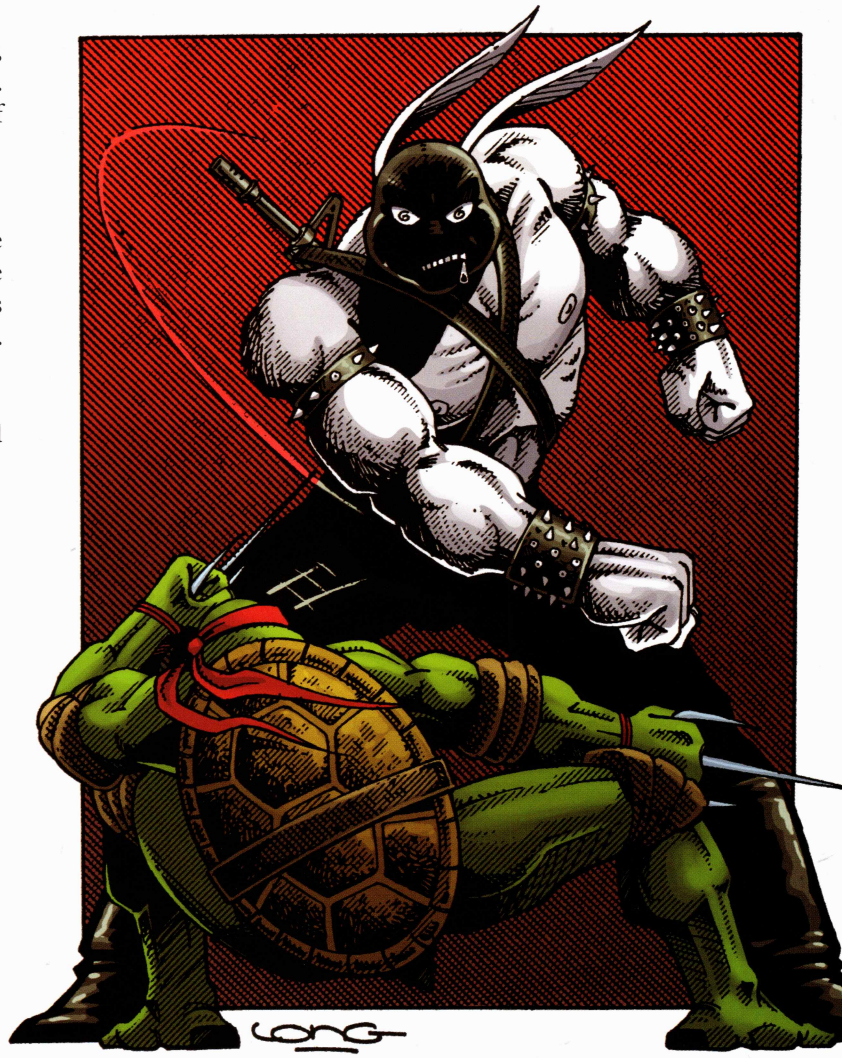
Lambert Bullwark, Executive Producer

Monolithic Movie Studios

10 Mortimer Mount Blvd, Suite 50

Hollywood, California.

(213) 555-MEGA



L.A. ARRIVAL CHARACTERS

FOOT CLAN FROGMAN

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 26 **SDC:** 24

Average Age: 25 **Sex:** Male **Size Level:** 11

Weight: 160 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 9 inches

Attributes: IQ 8, MA 11, ME 9, PS 14, PP 14, PE 12, PB 8, Spd 14

Experience Level: Fourth

Combat Skill: Hand to Hand: Ninjutsu, four actions per round.

Bonuses: +4 to Strike, +3 to Parry, +3 to Dodge, +5 to melee Damage, +3 to Roll with Impact.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Knife, WP Paired, WP Targeting (spear gun); +1 to Strike and Parry with these weapons.

Skills of Note: Athletics: General, Acrobatics, Body Building, SCUBA, Advanced Swimming 85%, Prowl 78%, Pilot Automobile 90%, Pilot Motorboat 50%

Weapons: Spear Gun (2D6 damage), Knives (1D6 damage)

Armor: Wet suit: AR 5, SDC 10

Personal Profile: Foot Frogmen are Foot Assassins who have been specially trained to fight on and under the water. They are silent, fanatical ninjas who serve Shredder with an unswerving loyalty. They also have no sense of humor.

THE GREAT WHITE SHARK

Alignment: Hungry

Hit Points: 40 **SDC:** 90 **Size Level:** 14

Attributes of Note: Animal IQ, PS 24, Speed underwater 26.

Combat Skills: Chomp (4D6 damage), two actions per round.

Bonuses: +1 to Strike, +2 to Dodge, +8 to melee Damage.

Skills & Weapons: Not applicable.

Natural Armor Rating: 7

Personal Profile: The shark is a normal creature. It is not mutated, but it is very hungry.

TYPICAL GOON - MAGALDI CARTEL

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 18 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 22 **Sex:** Male **Size Level:** 10

Weight: 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 11 inches

Attributes: IQ 7, MA 8, ME 8, PS 9, PP 9, PE 9, PB 9, Spd 9.

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, two actions per round.

Bonuses: +1 to Parry and Dodge.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun.

Skills of Note: Pilot Automobile 98%, Pilot Boats: Motor 65%.

Weapons: Knife (1D6 damage), 9mm pistol (2D6) *or* Uzi (3D6)

Armor: None

Personal Profile: These Magaldi Cartel Goons are a cruel and loutish bunch. They are used to a life of violence and easy money. They reveal important information only if pressured.

REEL 3: MONOLITHIC MOVIE STUDIOS

Simple library or internet research provides basic data about Monolithic Studios:

- Monolithic is one of the top six largest movie studios in the country, with a rich tradition dating back to the 1920s. Every year they produce dozens of multi-million dollar movies.
- Monolithic has a huge Hollywood headquarters that houses their offices and studios. Everybody knows where it is located.
- Vincent Darkins is the studio's star director famous for blockbuster action films, and known as an industry genius.
- Lambert Bullwark is the owner of the studio and known to be an aggressive and ruthless businessman who always gets his way. He has destroyed more than a few careers, some out of spite. He has been accused of mob connections, but no such affiliation has ever been proven.
- The following films are currently under production:

  "It Came From the Supermarket": Horror movie about food additives.

  "Six Flags Over Totie Fields": Comedy.

  "Ghostwhackers IX": Spooky Comedy.

  "The Cosmoroids": Sci-fi space epic by famed director Vincent Darkins.

  "A Heartbeat Away": Wacky comedy about an incompetent vice-president.

  "Gunfighter Death Hunt": Psycho Cowboy Western.

  "Misfit Patrol": World War II action thriller.

  "Passions of a Lonely Heart": Romance.

GAME MASTER INFORMATION

WITHOUT A CLUE

If the business card clue is insufficient to get the heroes moving, give the clue more credibility. The rival drug dealer could tell our heroes that Monolithic Studios is involved with the distribution of drugs and is working with the Ratt Pak "on something big."

They could also be approached by a street punk selling drugs.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> "Psst, buddy. Hey, wanna see something new? It's called Blue Ice. It's great! I'm giving away free samples. Try it. Whattaya got to lose?"

After the pusher has been apprehended and put in a more cooperative state of mind, he reveals the following:

> "Some fat, balding guy in an expensive suit, dunno his name, I met him on the back lot of Monolithic Studios. He paid me to give this stuff away free on the streets."

This should get our intrepid heroes to Monolithic Studios.

A VISIT TO THE STUDIO

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Monolithic Movie Studios is a huge compound made up of very Californian ranch-style buildings enclosed by a huge, fifteen-foot tall, stone fence. Above the main gate is a huge black marble sign:
>
> **MONOLITHIC MOVIE STUDIOS**
>
> **WHERE ILLUSION IS MORE IMPORTANT**
>
> **THAN REALITY**
>
> Bored security guards sit in glass booths at the entrances, checking ID tags as the rich and famous drive in and out. The guards routinely turn away thrill-seekers trying to bluff their way through with phony stories. "But I really *am* Elvis!", one man wails plaintively as he's escorted away.

GAINING ACCESS TO THE STUDIO GROUNDS

The heroes can choose their avenue of entry. They can hop over the wall when the guards aren't looking, they can hold onto the underside of a car or supply truck going in, or they can distract the guards and zip through the open gate.

If they really want to get clever, they could try to bluff their way in, forge fake IDs, make a deal with someone who has a valid ID, etc. As long as the players' idea sounds reasonable, or at least fun, allow it to work.

If they attract the guards' attention, they will have to elude them. The guards have the stats of normal humans (around 9 in most Attributes - no bonuses or penalties to most rolls); use the stats listed at the end of this adventure series.

INVITED TO VISIT

It is possible to get authorized admittance by calling Lambert Bullwark, or his press secretary, or director Vincent Darkins, and scheduling a meeting. The heroes can get an appointment by posing as journalists or as actors' agents.

Another sure way in is letting Bullwark know you have something to offer him, like publicity, money, information about "Blue Ice" or "the Ratt Pak," etc. Once they have a legitimate appointment, the guards let them in.

ENCOUNTERS AT MONOLITHIC STUDIOS

This first overview section is to be read to the players once their characters have entered the compound. It will work just as well if they climb a nearby building or fly overhead to get a bird's-eye view of the Monolithic Studios.

Yeah, Monolithic has more sets than normal movie companies, but hey, it's more fun that way.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Monolithic Studios looks like a miniature town and covers ten city blocks. There are large buildings,

stores, and new construction all connected by a maze of roads.

Like so much of Los Angeles, most of the buildings are low and spread out, with lots of shrubs, small plants, and palm trees around them. There are office buildings, soundstages, hotels, and even shops. Everything looks clean and friendly.

And then there's the other half of the studio city.

Beyond the cheerful business area of the compound is a surreal landscape of nightmare architecture. Some buildings are whole, but many are just facades - phony fronts and sides with no real interiors.

The first few blocks look like a western frontier town, but a block or two beyond looks like Paris during World War II after a bombing. Just beyond that is a futuristic city, and past that is a medieval castle. Modern-day buildings blend into depression-era streets. Suburbia stands next to feudal Japan. The prow of a replica battleship juts over an artificial ocean.

The next part of the compound is sprawling and obviously filled with outdoor sets.

The last portion, farthest away, are the soundstages.

DAY OR NIGHT

How the heroes conduct themselves depends on *when* they choose to visit. The daytime activities at Monolithic are different from nighttime activities.

During the day there are thousands of people at Monolithic, working in the offices, studios, and soundstages. The pace is hectic - in a laid-back California sort of way.

By night the offices are closed, but there are always a few hundred people filming night scenes and partying. Things are calmer but the parties, that sometimes last until 4:00 in the morning, are more frenetic.

PROWL OR THE STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH

Another important factor to consider is whether the party chose a sneak approach or a more straightforward one. If they are openly wandering around the studio, the encounters that follow include them as participants. If they are sneaking around, the encounters happen around them, but they won't be involved.

THE MAIN AREAS

There are three main areas that make up Monolithic Studios. There are mini-adventures in each area, but **the heroes should experience the Business Area and Outdoor Sets first**, as the first two areas preface the main showdown at the Soundstages in Reel 4 and Reel 5.

1) The Business Area: Office buildings, shops, and hotels.

2) The Outdoor Sets: A surreal landscape of whole buildings and facades of buildings.

3) The Soundstages: Huge buildings containing indoor sets and production facilities.

THE BUSINESS AREA

The characters will come here when they want to talk to/spy on Bullwark. The encounters can be played in any order, depending on whether they go directly to Bullwark's office, or wander around first. Game Masters should feel free to add any encounters of their own to the few suggested here.

By day: People bustle through the offices, looking very busy.

By night: The place is quiet at night except for parties and the occasional employee working late.

The office buildings look like office buildings in any other industry, except there are movie posters everywhere, and a lot of people look familiar. People bustle along the streets, couriers deliver packages, and cars choke the road with miniature gridlock. There are restaurants, parties in full swing, and even a huge movie theater.

BUSINESS AREA SCENE 1: PARTY ANIMALS

The heroes walk in on a Hollywood party and are cheerfully accepted as members of the studio.

They see some famous stars and some not-so-famous stars, along with a bunch of more ordinary-looking people, partying down in a large suite of rooms. Loud music blares from giant speakers. The people are laughing, chatting, and dancing on the tables. Waiters bring around silver platters with pâté, snails, oysters, caviar, vegetables and dips, and those tiny little sandwiches. Everybody seems friendly and in a party mood.

No one regards our heroes as unusual even if they wear strange costumes or are mutants. If they put on some simple form of disguise, they can jump in and party too (a good way to get some basic information about the studio and Bullwark). They can help themselves to the free food, boogie down on the dance floor, or hobnob with the guests.

Here are some mini-encounters...

THE INFATUATED STARLET

A starlet comes up to them and says, "Oh, you are the most adorable little special effects. Are they making more munchkin movies?"

If one or more of our heroes talk to her, she becomes infatuated with one of them (it doesn't really matter who), and follows them around throughout the party. She's sweet and pretty, but a

bit of an air-head. She's at the party to meet people and make connections. Unfortunately, she has had a few drinks too many and has "connected" herself to one of the heroes. She is of no help in the information department because she loves the studio, loves her work, and simply loves everybody! She makes it difficult for the hero in question to easily sneak off with the group, maneuver quietly through the party, or leave the gathering altogether without making a scene and drawing a lot of attention.

THE CON MAN

A shifty guy holding two drinks says to the heroes: "Hey, you guys looking for an agent? I'll be your agent for just $5,000 down."

He is a loud, fast talker, covered in expensive jewelry and Italian clothes. Although he has little genuine info to share, he does offer a few morsels.

"Yeah, that Bullwark can be a tough cookie, babe, but his name is money in this town; know what I mean? ...What? Does he have mob connections? Let's just say he *is* a very connected person. But not to worry! That's where an agent who is really concerned for his client comes in. I'll insulate you from bad scripts, bad PR, and from Bullwark himself... and only for 33%... etcetera... etcetera"

The shady agent is a two-bit con artist who preys on desperate individuals looking to break into the film industry. He's a creep, but is not linked to drugs, the Ratt Pak, or Bullwark. He will move on to a potential "new client" as soon as he realizes that the character(s) are not interested. **Note:** He can get the group an interview with Bullwark, but he'll want his $5000 per person first (probably not worth it at all).

THE INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE AGENT

While looking for a bathroom, one of the player characters accidentally enters the partially open door of a darkened room where a man is using a tiny flashlight to look through some files. As soon as the hero enters the room the man shuts off the flashlight and dives for cover behind a couch. He is an industrial spy for the *Twenty-Second Century Movie Studio,* and is at the party to read the latest scripts at Monolithic.

The spy will remain behind the couch, making anybody who wants to investigate walk over to him. He will try to run for it if somebody does come to where he's hiding. If he is apprehended, the people throwing the party immediately recognize him as one of the sleazy private investigators employed by the rival studio. They are very grateful, and help our heroes in their investigation, including getting them an appointment with Bullwark.

Note: The spy is unarmed and offers little resistance. He has nothing to say without his attorney and ignores threats. If forced to talk or psionically probed, he still has no useful information. He's simply an unethical private eye who will consider anything if the price is right. He knows nothing about Bullwark other than rumors that he may be involved in some unethical practices and has alleged mob connections.

GAME MASTER NOTE

WHAT THE PARTYGOERS KNOW

None of the guests are familiar with Blue Ice, Subliminal Message Generators, or the Ratt Pak. If a guest is asked about mutant animals, he or she thinks a moment and says, "They have a lot of weird critters on the Cosmoroids set. Soundstage A. You might try there."

If asked about Bullwark, they offer a wide variety of opinions:

- "He's a great guy who made a lot of money for the studio, he's among the best. Do you work for him? Will he give me a job now?"
- "He's total scum. The lowest form of life. The worst. He steals all the best ideas and scripts, uses people, and mistreats the talent. Of course, you realize I wouldn't be saying this if I wasn't completely inebriated, and out of my mind with mild alcohol poisoning."
- "Bullwark? Don't cross him. He has absolute power. He's destroyed more careers than I can count. Of course, if he likes you, you're set for life in this business."
- Everybody has heard rumors about his affiliation with the mob, but nobody knows if these rumors are true. Most would not be surprised if they were.

BUSINESS AREA SCENE 2: PIZZA!

One of the recommended places to eat is *Paula's Pizza Place.* It's a quaint, little restaurant that specializes in "health food" pizza. The only toppings available are things like tofu, asparagus, green salad delight, wheat germ, and sushi surprise. Despite its deviant menu, the pizzas are actually delicious.

While waiting for pizza, the heroes notice a tough-looking teenager wearing gang colors and insignia (the heroes may have seen him during their street investigations in the earlier adventures). He is joined by a movie executive type in an expensive dress suit, but the meeting lasts less than a minute. The female exec hands him a small package then leaves. The teen smiles, tucks it into his jacket, and leaves.

Either or both characters can be easily apprehended, searched, questioned, or followed.

The drug gang member is a snotty, wisecracking 17-year-old who has more guts than brains. He pretends to not know what's in the package or how it got inside his jacket. The packet contains a pound of Blue Ice.

If persuaded to talk, the punk reveals his drug boss instructed him to go to the pizza joint to make a pickup of some "stuff." He also knows that the drug is a new "designer" type to be distributed free. The kid's got a record a mile long and will be arrested if the police are called.

If followed, he goes to the seedier parts of town to distribute the "stuff."

The executive insists this is all a horrible mistake and she may even cry if confronted. She claims never to have seen the gang member and knows nothing about drugs. She has no police record and is a well-known studio executive who often eats at the pizza place.

If followed or the right methods of persuasion are employed, it is discovered that she works for Mr. Bullwark's office. She does indeed know about the drugs and it is her job to see that the right people are given these "samples" so that a new market can be developed. She also uses and deals street drugs.

GAME MASTER NOTE

If enough pressure is applied the exec may even confess that Mr. Bullwark deals in illicit drugs and within the last week, "Blue Ice"! The source of the drugs is the Magaldi Cartel. The Cartel's new drug enforcers are a group calling themselves the "Ratt Pak." The exec also knows that Mr. Bullwark has some special deal going down with the Pak, but doesn't know what it is.

If the police are involved the executive denies everything the heroes claim she's said. Mr. Bullwark is appropriately appalled that one of his people could be involved in drug dealing and promises to "look into the matter, with the assurance that we will prosecute to the full extent of the law. Monolithic Studios is beyond reproach and we will keep it that way!"

BUSINESS AREA SCENE 3: LAMBERT BULLWARK

Exactly how the heroes get in to see Mr. Bullwark is somewhat irrelevant. They may fabricate a story to get in, bully their way in, or sneak in. They could even wait for him to come out, and question him outside his building. To get an appointment they had better come up with a good story or find somebody with connections. Bullwark is a high-powered producer, and lots of people want his time. Mentioning Labb Ratt or any of the Ratt Pak work to get them an appointment, but he will be on his toes. Appeals to his honor, civic-mindedness, or requests for his cooperation to help stop dangerous renegades *do not* work to get an appointment.

If the heroes push past his secretary, three Monolithic Security Guards show up in two rounds (30 seconds). They then have to deal with an irate Bullwark while resisting the security guards. He is not eager to speak to vigilantes, but if they are persistent, he answers a few basic questions - especially if they seem to know about Blue Ice or the Ratt Pak (he wants to know exactly how much they really do know).

If the heroes make too much trouble, Bullwark calls five security guards to have them escorted out of the compound. If our heroes fight, five more guards are called for backup, and eventually, the police are called - all of them are honest security or law enforcement personnel.

TALKING TO BULLWARK

Once the group has an appointment, or has cornered Bullwark,

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Bullwark leans back, puffs deeply on his cigar, and says, gruffly, "OK, you got my attention. Make it short and sweet."

Bullwark is a smooth and accomplished negotiator who can look you straight in the eye and lie with a smile. If they ask about the Ratt Pak, he denies knowing anything about them, and asks what you know. He also plays dumb about Blue Ice, Subliminal Message Generators, and mutant animals. However, the more the heroes seem to know, the more edgy Bullwark gets.

If they ask what White Rabbit was doing with his card, he snarls, "Lotsa guys have my card. I'm a very well-known producer. That's no crime, is it?"

During the questioning, Bullwark asks, "Hey, who are you guys, anyway?" A quick, strong response is the best reply.

During the conversation in his office, observant characters notice a few Blue Ice flakes on the coffee table. When asked about the Blue Ice on his desk, he denies any knowledge of it.

WHEN THEY SEE THE BLUE ICE, READ THE FOLLOWING:

> "I dunno what that is. Who knows what stuff people bring through here, I see a hundred people a day! I can't keep track of who leaves what! Look, I can see you kids mean well, but you got the wrong idea about me. People say lots of things about a man in my position. I've got lots of enemies, some I deserve, some I don't, but they're out there. Don't let my rep fool you. I may be many things, but I'm no drug dealer. What the heck would I be doing mixed up with mutant animal criminals anyway? Monolithic Studios is worth billions. Why would I jeopardize all that? I sure don't need to sell drugs."

Soon Bullwark brings the meeting to a close, saying, "Well, I don't know what I can do to convince you otherwise. Maybe one of my people is using my studio for illicit purposes. Where can I contact you if I learn anything?"

If the group actually gives him the address of the place they are staying, the Ratt Pak will be waiting there for them. Ad-lib an attack the next time the heroes return there.

GAME MASTER NOTE

The Ratt Pak needs the mutagenic drugs to retain their intelligence and other abilities. Without it, they will slowly revert

to their animal state. If White Rabbit did get the drugs in Malibu, the whole Ratt Pak is still at maximum strength. If they did not retrieve the Malibu drugs, they will be at medium strength (the second set of attributes and stats listed).

Certainly the Ratt Pak laying in wait to attack the heroes should confirm Bullwark is a creep and definitely involved with them!

SPYING ON BULLWARK

If they sneak into his office and spy on him, they watch him call people and yell at them all day. He is bullying and unpleasant, but says nothing incriminating. He demands lots of shipments of new equipment and orders script rewrites that are obviously not well-received.

KILLING BULLWARK

If Bullwark is somehow killed, the Ratt Pak makes a deal with a different producer, and the adventure continues.

USING PSIONIC POWERS

Characters with psionic abilities can try to read Bullwark's mind to get answers from him. If they do, they find a Mind Block in place. They cannot tell if it is an innate power or a created effect (it's been manufactured by Brain Drain).

THE OUTDOOR SETS

The outdoor sets are a huge, confusing terrain. If the heroes walk around the maze of sets, have them roll a 20-sided, if they roll under their IQ they remember their way. A failed roll means they become hopelessly lost in the nightmare world of Hollywood illusion. Unless they ask for directions, the group remains lost and wastes 1D4 hours going in circles.

The first two scenes are just for fun - if you like them, use them. If you want to get on with the adventure, go right to Scene 3: Brain Drain's Machines.

OUTDOOR SETS SCENE 1: WAR

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> You are walking along a scenic street that looks like a quaint European city, circa 1940. Actors in picturesque clothes stroll the boulevards. Suddenly, you hear the whine of airplane engines, and a loud whistling sound.
>
> Then the street in front of you erupts in a fiery explosion! You can feel the heat. This seems too real to be a movie. The other people run for cover. Bombs erupt all around. Then a wall next to you buckles, and topples over toward you.

Note: The heroes must each roll a dodge (a "6" or higher) to avoid flying debris - failure means 2D6 damage from flying bricks.

> Suddenly, you hear a woman shrieking! Ahead you see a wall buckling. It is about to topple on a baby carriage!

There is time to leap forward and save the baby if the heroes act immediately. First, roll for initiative; all rolls above a "10" mean the individual is alert and making his move. Then roll to strike - a success means the character gets to the baby carriage and pushes it out of harm's way. Then roll a dodge to see if our hero(s) can get out of harm's way before the wall topples on top of them! A failed roll to strike means that particular character has gotten to the carriage but has failed to remove it from harm's way (they can try to protect it with their body). Another hero can try to save the carriage with the same consequences. A failed dodge roll means the wall falls on top of the character(s), inflicting surprisingly little harm - just 2D8 damage.

As it turns out, this is all a movie set and there's no baby in the carriage, just a doll. After the devastation ends, the director and his assistants come running and screaming;

> "Cut! What do you idiots think you're doing!! The special effects crew will have to spend days to re-create that scene! This a period piece and you stuntmen just wrecked it. What? Did you really think there was a baby in peril? Geez, I hate new people.
>
> Look, I'll let it go this time, mainly because you guys looked sooo good in action. Don't let it be said that I can't recognize talent.
>
> Now... GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!!!"

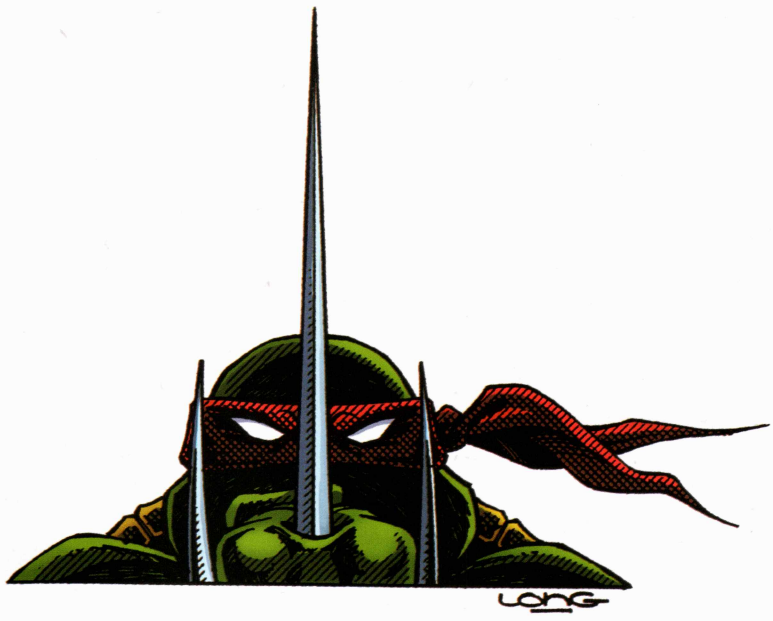
If the group is lost, somebody gladly points them in the right direction, and away from the tumultuous set.

OUTDOOR SETS SCENE 2: A CRY FOR HELP

As our intrepid crime fighters stroll along, they enter a bizarre world of half-built buildings and 1930s cars. It is clearly another period movie set. From the looks of things, it is for a gangster movie. Suddenly, a woman cries out, "Help! Someone help me!"

If they run to the rescue, they find themselves standing in front of filming cameras on a 1930s gangster movie set. The woman crying for help and the man menacing her are actors. If they didn't learn anything from their previous encounter, they will have another irate director screaming at them for ruining his film. Time to bow out gracefully.

If they looked before they leaped, they see that the cry for help is only part of a movie.



OUTDOOR SETS SCENE 3: BRAIN DRAIN'S MACHINES

As our heroes continue their way through the array of outdoor sets, they enter a set that looks like the streets of an Old West frontier town. It's currently deserted. There are no actors or technicians about.

Out of the shadows, they notice a spider-like robot emerge and scuttle along the street. It places some sort of electronic device under a horse trough and scuttles back into cover. Moments later it emerges with an identical device and places it under a wagon.

If they continue to watch the robot, it ambles down the street, placing electronic devices all around the soundstage. The characters can easily walk over to examine one of the devices. It seems to be designed to emit a pulse of light in regular intervals, but there is clearly more to it than that. If the person examining the device triggers it to flash a few times, he is unharmed but feels a little lightheaded for a moment. Characters with psionics sense the white flashes to have been a psionic attack. Thorough examination by a hero with electrical skills, mechanical skills, or use of the psionic power "object read" conclusively proves this to be one of the prototype *Subliminal Message Generators.*

If the heroes attack the spider robot, they can destroy it easily (SDC 50, no defenses), but this alerts Brain Drain who appears behind them and attacks by surprise.

If the spider robot is followed, it leads them back to Brain Drain, who is behind one of the fake buildings tinkering with some weird electronic apparatus.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> The creature is a huge, menacing robot with a giant brain floating in a clear container. He barks in a tinny, electronically synthesized voice, "You have violated a protected area! Special measures will be taken!" He raises his arm and levels a crackling energy blast at you.

Brain Drain attacks with all his weapons blazing. He refuses to answer questions, and blasts away with a blind fury. Five spider robots swarm around, flailing at heroes who are not under the direct assault of Brain Drain. Fortunately, they are not designed for combat and do minimal damage (1D6 damage, two actions per round, +1 to strike, parry, and dodge. 50 SDC total, AR 10).

During the fight, Brain Drain shouts, "You cannot defeat Brain Drain, little humanoids! Surrender!" If the group really does surrender, he continues attacking them without mercy - they have seen too much and must die! However, if his foes seem too powerful or reduce his SDC by over half, Brain Drain flees via teleportation.

If Brain Drain defeats the heroes, he leaves. Note that he does not check to see if they are still alive, so they can trick the villain by feigning death. Likewise, if they flee from Brain Drain, he gives up pursuit within a matter of minutes (8 rounds of chase) and teleports away.

OUTDOOR SETS SCENE 4: COSMOROIDS

In this encounter, the adventurers get mixed up in the filming of Vincent Darkins' sci-fi movie, Cosmoroids. Start this encounter while they are walking around inside the soundstage.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> You find yourselves on the set of a science fiction film. The equipment is all labeled "Cosmoroids." Lots of people in weird, alien costumes roam about. Some of the costumes are frighteningly realistic. Suddenly, a stagehand points at you and says, "Hey! You guys! You're late! Put the rest of your costumes on NOW!"
>
> He tosses some strange black hooded robes at you, and hands you some lightweight plastic swords and blaster pistols.
>
> He says, "What's the matter? The guys in make-up backlogged again? Or did you just take a long lunch? These rewrites have got everything screwed up!"

If the Ninja Turtles or other bizarre characters are being played, the stage people assume that they are in costume and are part of the film. If they are comparatively normal-looking humans, the stagehands assume they are actors who are yet to dress in their costumes.

If the heroes comply and put on the robes, the stagehand is satisfied. Continue with the next read-aloud section.

If the heroes don't comply, they arouse the stagehand's suspicions. He says, "What's the matter? Aren't you guys the Furdlings? What are you doing here?" Security guards may be summoned, but the team should be able to escape them easily. However, the security guards continue looking for them.

THIS VICIOUS CABARET

Before our heroes can vacate the premises, they stumble on to the filming of the "Vicious Cabaret" scene. Here they see the villain **Lounge Lizard** play the organ and use the Subliminal Message Generator from a spectator's view from beyond the set. They also have a chance to attack him.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> When you finish putting on your robes, the stagehand leads you down a dim corridor to a strange set. Before you get there, a make-up girl approaches and says, "Oh my, make-up let you out like THAT? This will never do. Hold still."
>
> The make-up girl says, "You're not nearly green enough. What's wrong with that make-up crew?" She paints your cheeks and lips and eyelids with fluorescent green makeup, and lets you go, saying, "Now be sure to come right back if you need a touch-up."
>
> The stagehand leads you into the huge, smoky sci-fi cabaret soundstage filled with bizarre mutant creatures with make-up jobs so good it's hard to tell if they aren't actually authentic. There are huge, shaggy monsters, pterodactyl creatures, fish-men, plant-men, insect-men, and walrus-creatures, and others too weird to easily describe.
>
> Some are sitting at the bar, some are slouching in booths, some are sitting around hovering tables, and some are perched in the rafters. If you look for the Ratt Pak, you can't see any; no rat, cat, rabbit, lizard, or guinea pig creatures. Or brain creatures, for that matter.
>
> You don't know where your characters are supposed to go in the space saloon. An exasperated stagehand moves you around to different locations; he puts two together at the bar, one at the floating table, and the others in the rafters. You can all see each other from your positions.

The heroes sneak a peak at the script and see that during the crowd scene, the Furdling aliens are to "look wistful and misty-eyed as they fondly remember the methane swamps of their home planet Furd, and chant loud salutations to others in the Cabaret."

This means very little, and it really doesn't matter what they do in the next scene as long as it is not disruptive.

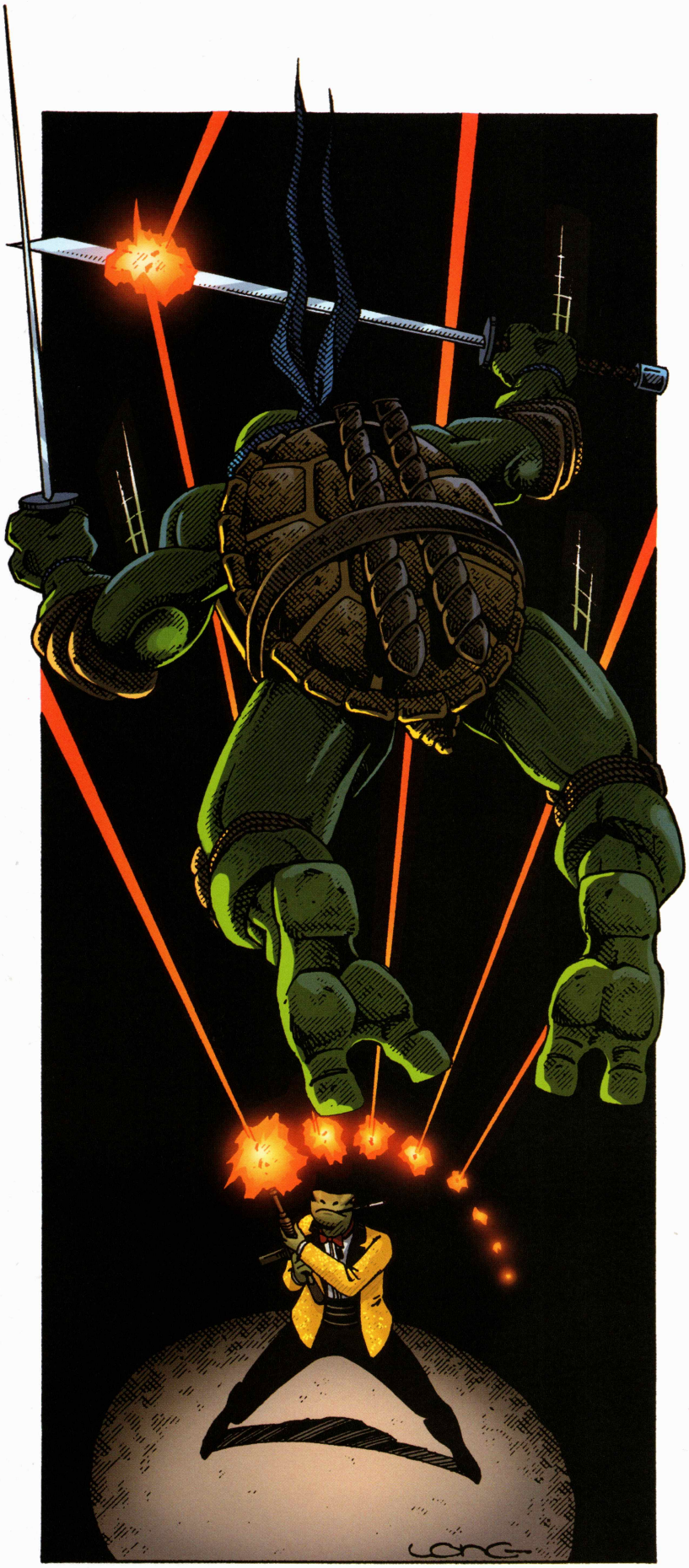
> A hush falls on the set. Cameras start rolling. Famous director **Vincent Darkins** says, "And... take it."
>
> His assistant barks, "Cosmoroids, Scene: 327, Rewrite #1: This Vicious Cabaret. Take one!"
>
> The denizens of the bar immediately start babbling in a weird cacophony of voices. The huge mobile camera platform moves past the crowd, raising and lowering to film the strange assortment of creatures.

The heroes can ignore the cameras, hide from them, mug shamelessly, wave to the folks at home, or do anything they please. As long as they don't do anything violent, filming goes on. **Remember,** the heroes are in disguise or in concealing costumes, so they retain their secret identities.

> Unexpectedly, a bizarre chord rumbles through the room. Lights come up on a large space tech pipe organ. There is a slender figure hunched over it, playing slow, complex chords. He is wearing a sequined yellow tuxedo. A hush falls over the room as he begins to sing.

GM Note: Recite Lounge Lizard's song with a menacing tone.

> *"When the world is cold and boring,*
>
> *And you feel low as scum,*
>
> *There are facts you try ignoring,*
>
> *Such as what your life's become.*
>
> *There are simpler ways to cope,*
>
> *At the far end of your rope,*
>
> *Just surrender your control,*
>
> *To me..."*
>
> Wild, barely perceptible pulses of light flash from the complex machinery of the organ. It was so quick



you would have missed it, except that it sent a cold chill up your spine, and made your brain feel like it was momentarily invaded by a hostile alien presence.

Psionic characters register this as a psionic attack.

Suddenly, you feel like doing just what the weird singer says, surrender control of your life to him. You feel sedate, melancholy, and drained... then the moment passes, and you have control of your thoughts again.

The strange musician turns and faces the camera. It is a tall mutant lizard, and he smiles a wicked, seductive smile at the camera, and laughs a sinister laugh. His face looks incredibly lifelike. Too real!

The lizard hits a final chord on the organ, and suddenly the spotlight on him goes out, plunging him into darkness. The lights flash up again, and he is gone.

Yep, it's *Lounge Lizard,* one of the Ratt Pak's key operators.

Our champions recognize the flash of light as the same as the one seen and felt on the cowboy set. They should realize this must be the mysterious *Subliminal Message Generator (SMG).* Each time the lizard hits an organ key, the light flashes and the mental message to submit is repeated. Those with a computer science. electrical, or engineering background realize that the pulses of light from the organ are encoding Labb Ratt's powerful subliminals onto the film as it is being shot!

Give the players a chance to react. They may impulsively attack, or they may choose to keep their cool and not tip their hand early. Psionic characters can protect themselves with a mind block. Those without psionic skills feel their will slipping away as they are overwhelmed by apathy. However, this brief exposure to the SMG has no lasting effect on anybody. As soon as the music ends, the overwhelming emotions of despair and apathy also end.

If the heroes attack, see Shoot the Piano Player, which follows.

If the heroes don't attack, the scene is completed, and the actors are dismissed. They can leave or follow Lounge Lizard. The mutant lizard can be followed to his dressing room. After a while there is no noise coming from his room. Entering the room reveals it to be empty; Lounge Lizard has gotten away (teleported). Go to Poking Around Backstage, below.

SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER

If the heroes decide to immediately attack the lizard, the whole place erupts in furor - actors rush away to avoid being hurt, studio guards rush around the perimeter, unsure of whether they should enter the area being filmed, and various techs run around trying to protect their equipment.

The organ is projecting the subliminals, and has an SDC of 100. If it is attacked, sparks fly from it and it makes a horrible moaning sound.

However, it is Lounge Lizard who should be their main target. Any mutant animal recognizes him to be a mutant (not a costume) and they were told about the Ratt Pak's "lizard enforcer" in their earlier investigations. The lizard tries to escape

if he can, but he is not a coward and can be a fierce opponent. He fights back with his *mind traitor* power to take control of one character's mind and make them fight the others. He then whips out his submachine gun and blasts away. He stays and fights until he is below 10 SDC then teleports away. Of course, if the heroes act quickly they may incapacitate him before he can zap to safety.

WHEN THE FIGHT IS OVER READ THE FOLLOWING:

> The director shouts, "And... cut! That was fantastic!"
>
> His assistant yells, "Wait! That's wrong! The Furdlings aren't supposed to attack until the next scene!"
>
> The director replies, "I don't care, it was fantastic! It was much better than the useless rewrite Bullwark gave us."

The heroes can stay and talk to the energetic director, Vincent Darkins. He congratulates them and is enthusiastic about their performances. They may want to make up a good story about why they attacked, but it's not necessary. If asked about the rewrites or what it is like working for Bullwark, Darkins explains that Bullwark is often an unreasoning bully who runs his studio like a third world dictator. He often makes script or actor changes just to reinforce who's boss. This particular movie has been the victim of numerous changes to the script and delays in shooting due to restructuring of sets. The Lizard in the Vicious Cabaret scene was added in just this morning. The characters may want to question him further, but he bows out, saying he has an important meeting coming up. If they plead to meet with him later, he agrees.

GAME MASTER NOTE

FIGHT THEN FLEE

If the heroes fight and flee, they raise the suspicions of the security guards, and the guards are on the lookout for them throughout the rest of the adventure. Add some scenes of guards hassling them. Remember, depending on how well disguised they were, the Monolithic security forces may not have a clear or accurate description of them. Many of the spectators think of them in terms of the movie: "Yeah, then . . . then this Furdling in the rafters just swooped down like a bat! What did he look like? Well, umm... a Furdling... I mean a..."

POKING AROUND BACKSTAGE

After the Cosmoroids scene, the heroes can continue their investigation. Talking to the stagehands and other actors, they learn that nobody knows much about the "lizard actor." He reportedly keeps to himself and is rarely seen elsewhere at the studio. He is never seen out of costume and most people feel uneasy with him. "It's almost like he's never out of character, you know what I mean. It's like this dude really is a lizard-man. Scary." A few people recall seeing him talking to a "rat-man" in an expensive suit. "We thought he was part of the cabaret scene, but he must have been cut from it, 'cause we never saw him again."

They can examine the futuristic pipe organ after a tech crew finishes wheeling it into an empty storage room down the hall. Sure enough, a search uncovers a larger, more sophisticated version of the weird electronic device they found at the cowboy set. A successful Mechanics (any), Mechanical Engineering, or Electrical Engineer roll enables them to remove the Subliminal Message Generator. The device can also be easily destroyed (30 SDC) without wrecking the organ.

GAME MASTER NOTE

THE SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE GENERATOR

The SMG encodes a lot of information into small pulses of light, and beams them out onto recordings. The prototype can't control minds directly, but can enhance the words spoken simultaneously while operating it, causing the observer to believe in the words or the person speaking. It is definitely a means of mind control.

The SMG machine is too unusual to be completely understood, even by a mechanical engineer. Consequently, our heroes can not reprogram it or alter its mind-controlling capability.

OUTDOOR SETS SCENE 5: THE ATTACK ON DARKINS

This encounter should occur after the group finishes examining the organ and are looking around, or later when they come back to meet with Mr. Darkins.

Suddenly, they hear a muffled "Don't you try..." followed by a crunching and smashing noise. That is followed by running footsteps and more smashing noises. "Help! Hel... mfff!" Crunch! Thud!!

The crime fighters know a brawl when they hear one, and this is definitely a brawl. Rushing to the rescue, they find four thugs in the next room roughing up Darkins.

GAME MASTER NOTE

If they do nothing, they hear more crunching noises, more muffled cries for help, and then Darkins and the thugs crash into the room they are in. Space Case, a mutant cat, watches it all from the adjoining room.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Four well-dressed thugs are roughing up famous director Vincent Darkins. One thug holds a bag of Blue Ice in one hand. Another is prying open Darkins' mouth.

A feline woman in an evening dress stands in the shadows of the next room. She purrs, "Time for your medicine, Darkins darling. I'm sure this will make you, like, WHOLE BUNCHES more cooperative. Hee, hee."

If the heroes do not stop the thugs, they'll force-feed Mr. Darkins a mouthful of Blue Ice. The result (roll percentile dice) will be: 01-20% shock to his system, sending him into a coma; 21-60 make him high and muddle his thoughts (lasts 6D6 minutes); 61-00 causes severe hallucination, which could be life threatening (lasts 1D4 hours). The latter result has a 10% chance of turning him into a Blue Ice addict.

If the heroes fly into action, Mr. Darkins stares in amazement. The thugs are not amused and counter by pulling out pistols to fight back. During the fight Space Case, the mutant cat, tries to stay out of direct combat using her *space out* powers to affect the heroes. Her power instills a sort of euphoria that reduces the attackers' number of actions per round and their reaction time. *See Space Case's description at the end of this adventure.*

Should Space Case and her thugs defeat the heroes (subduing them is satisfactory), she finds that Vincent Darkins has disappeared in the commotion (he's hiding nearby). "Oh, what a mess," she purrs. "Labb Ratt will not be happy about this." She sighs and mutters, "I wish honeykins would mellow out."

With a flash, they are gone (teleport).

Moments later, Mr. Darkins comes out of hiding in order to help his would-be rescuers. The famous director is a man of integrity and tries his best to protect and shelter the heroes from the police and criminals alike. Mr. Darkin's "best" is pretty formidable.

GAME MASTER NOTE

SPACE CASE

Space Case is at full strength if the Ratt Pak received the mutagenic drugs in Malibu. Otherwise, she is at the second level of strength; see character description. She teleports away when she is down to 10 SDC or less.

AFTER THE FIGHT

When the fight is over and all are safe, a stunned Vincent Darkins stares at the heroes and says, "Wh... what happened? Who are you?"

If the group tries to calm him or ask what happened, Mr. Darkins takes a deep breath and begins.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

"This morning, Lambert Bullwark demanded we make some last-minute additions to the script. He gave me some hastily written segments like the mutant Lounge Lizard in the Vicious Cabaret scene. He also had some new touches added to the set, not that I could see any changes.

"I protested, since the changes had no place in my film. But Bullwark is the producer, and he insisted. So I reluctantly agreed. He also demanded that we film this scene today. No delays will be tolerated, he said. So we handed out script changes and started shooting. Well, you saw what happened after that.

"After the filming I went over to Bullwark's office, and barged in on him. He was talking to some rat-headed man named Labb Ratt, who he introduced as a "special effect" in an upcoming movie.

"Labb Ratt offered me some strange blue, flaky narcotics. I told them what they could do with their drugs, and proceeded to lodge another protest against Mr. Bullwark's ethics. I told him my contract

guaranteed me total artistic freedom and said I would not accept any more of his interference.

"Bullwark just laughed. He was absolutely euphoric. I think he was tanked up on Labb Ratt's flakes. Then he started raving. Something about influencing the audience like never before seen in the history of film. Then he began to rant about the power to manipulate the audience's mind and control their thoughts. He offered me rulership of New York if I cooperated with him. I felt like I was in a 50s B-movie.

"As he babbled on, I told him he was crazy and started to leave. The rat guy blocked the door and just stared at me with this maniacal grin. Then Bullwark went off the deep end. It got real ugly. He threatened to ruin me if I fought his changes. Not only that, but he said that in addition to all the changes he's already ordered, he wants new mind-control gadgets in every scene. He must have been hallucinating. Mind control machines?

"I told him I wouldn't put my name to any movie so carelessly made, and told him I would gladly fight him in court, since I would win easily. I shoved the rat guy out of my way and left. As I stormed out, the rat creature said that I would soon be begging to do his bidding. I guess this is what they were talking about.

"Man, I believe this. When I got back to the soundstage those thugs were there. They attacked me... tried to shove those damn blue crystals down my throat. I thought I was a goner until you showed up. I don't know how to thank you. Jeez, I owe you guys my life. Or at least my free will. What do we do now?"

Moment of truth time. The group must decide whether to trust him, or not involve him any further (of course, he is already involved and certainly a target of the Ratt Pak). Either way, Darkins is amazed. He gladly answers their questions.

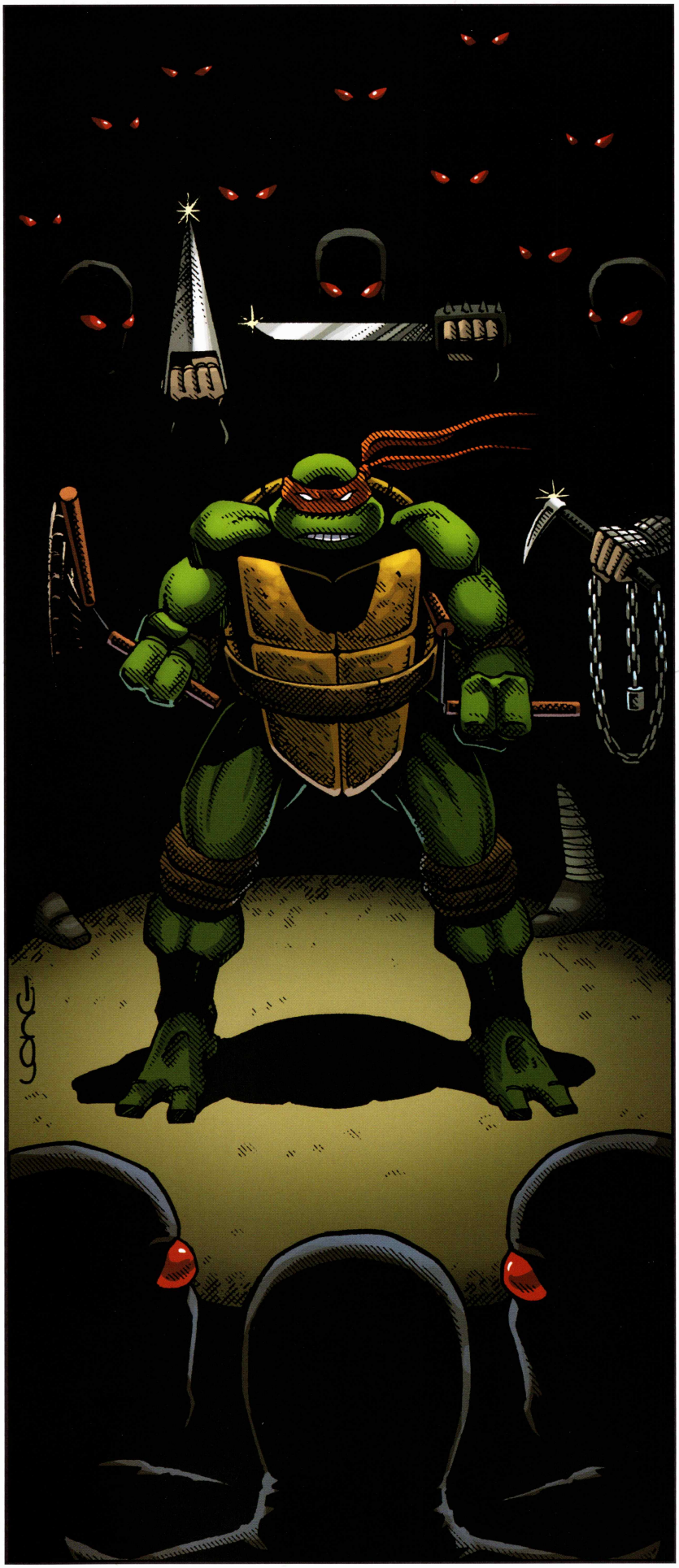
When told that the Subliminal Message Generator is real, Darkins says, "That's horrible. Well, I won't let them muck up my film with subliminals. What can we do to stop him? I'll help you in any way I can. He can't do this to people! It's monstrous!"

Things are really rolling now. Let's cruise to Reel 4 for the Strategy Session.

GAME MASTER NOTE
GETTING TO KNOW DARKINS

Should the heroes run off after saving the director without talking to him, they miss out on gaining a valuable ally.

Continue with the next section, modifying it to leave out Darkins' cooperation. However, he wants to find them again, and if he ever sees them hanging around the studio, he tries to talk to them.



The Ratt Pak

REEL 4: STRATEGY SESSION

What's next? Once again, it's up to the player characters to devise a strategy to stop these villains once and for all!

THINGS THE HEROES SHOULD CONSIDER:

- They have to protect Darkins. Despite his courage and conviction, he is likely to remain a target. He knows too much. This means the Ratt Pak and Bullwark will either have to force him to comply with their scheme or kill him.
- Find and stop the manufacturing of the Blue Ice drug. It seems likely that the drug factory is in the studio. Vincent Darkins will be valuable in tracking down likely locations.
- Find the Ratt Pak's headquarters. Again Mr. Darkins will have some suggestions, but shaking down Bullwark may be a better alternative.
- Time to act quickly. If the criminals think that things are falling apart they may disappear. However, the Ratt Pak and Bullwark should still feel in control, although angry with their interference.
- Perhaps the heroes can use the Pak's anger and lust for revenge to lure them out.
- Mr. Darkins offers to keep his film in production if it will help. He could even pretend to go along with Bullwark if it will lure out the villains! "I'll cooperate with you guys in any way necessary, and I'll help you keep your existence secret from the world. Help yourself to anything you need from the Cosmoroids set. It's all at your disposal. After all, if the Ratt Pak wins, it won't matter anyway."
- Mr. Darkins gladly gets the heroes I.D. passes so they can move freely around Monolithic studios. He also provides them master keys to open all locks in the soundstage and supplies them with maps of significant places and names and phone numbers of people on the studio grounds.
- He also provides them with a headquarters in the subbasement of the Cosmoroids set and offers them any other help he can reasonably provide.
- The characters may stay near Darkins in case the Ratt Pak tries to attack him again during the night, but no attack will come.
- Unless the characters took one of the subliminal message generators with them, from an earlier adventure, there are no SMGs to be found. The ones on the cowboy set and the Cosmoroids set are gone! Even fragments of damaged devices have been removed.

SEARCH AND DESTROY

What follows are several actions that the heroes may consider over the next few days. These result in mini-adventures that build into the final battle. Game Masters, feel free to enhance, beef-up, and develop these and other possibilities.

GETTING ANSWERS OUT OF BULLWARK

The violent approach, roughing up Bullwark, gets him to talk, but is not necessarily the best way to get answers. An attack on Bullwark is likely to involve innocent Monolithic security guards and risks scaring off the Ratt Pak if the group looks too tough.

Along the same lines, the group could capture Bullwark and hold him hostage. This gets the Ratt Pak to come and get him. leading to the final confrontation, as the Ratt Pak is sick and tired of the heroes' meddling.

The nonviolent approach can be just as effective in forcing events to a climax. Cornering Bullwark alone somewhere and browbeating him with threats and information gets him to have the Ratt Pak make their move.

For example, they could tell him that they know about Labb Ratt's Subliminal Message Generator (SMG). Knowledge that the SMG was being used by Lounge Lizard on the set of Cosmoroids convinces Bullwark that the group knows too much. Additional knowledge about the Ratt Pak, the SMG, Blue Ice, or Bullwark's plans scare him into action. **Game Masters**: subtly encourage the players to have their characters bluff him like crazy.

It may also be possible for mutant animal characters to trick Bullwark into thinking that they are Labb Ratt's fellow mutant creatures and wish to join him. This ruse *may* lead to a meeting and confrontation with the Ratt Pak.

If you feel the players' approach is credible, and they role-play well, Bullwark talks to them. What follows are some questions and suggested dialogue with Bullwark. He is a gruff and cocky individual who always pretends to be cool and unimpressed, even if he's quaking in his boots.

BULLWARK ANSWERS - ABOUT THE RATT PAK

IF ASKED ABOUT THE RATT PAK, READ THE FOLLOWING:

> "Yeah, OK, I'm working with those weird creatures. They came to me with this great plan. They got this subliminal thing, see. They can make audiences believe ANYTHING! Great idea, eh? We're gonna make our audiences believe that all my films are the greatest, and to keep coming back, and keep watchin' 'em! The worst piece of trash'll be a blockbuster. Ain't that a scorcher? I'll be the most successful producer in the world!
>
> "We could sell advertising, sell political candidates, the works! Soon I'll have half the world eating out of my hands. The possibilities are endless. Maybe I'll even make movies that are free to watch, just to get people into the theaters to get hooked! They'll keep coming back! I can be the greatest producer ever! I could rule the world!"

If the heroes tell him that Labb Ratt has far worse plans for humanity than controlling their movie choices, Bullwark laughs at them. The suggestion that the Pak is using him and that they'd cut him out once they got what they needed only causes Bullwark to snort and say, "I ain't no stupid kid, boyo, I can take care of myself. Especially from a bunch of mutant fur balls."

BULLWARK ANSWERS - ABOUT BLUE ICE

IF ASKED ABOUT BLUE ICE, READ THE FOLLOWING:

"It wasn't my idea to get Darkins hooked on that stuff. Labb Ratt thought it up. He said it would make the guy easier to handle. I was a little... uh... out of it at the time.""

Bullwark denies any involvement with the manufacturing and distribution of Blue Ice or other drugs. "You know so much, hot shots, prove it. Nobody's ever nailed drugs to me, and a lot better than you have tried!"

Of course he's dealing drugs, but he'll never admit it.

BULLWARK ANSWERS - ABOUT THE MUTAGENIC DRUGS

IF ASKED ABOUT MUTAGENIC DRUGS, READ THE FOLLOWING:

"Yeah, those Ratt Pak muties need the stuff to stay young and pretty."

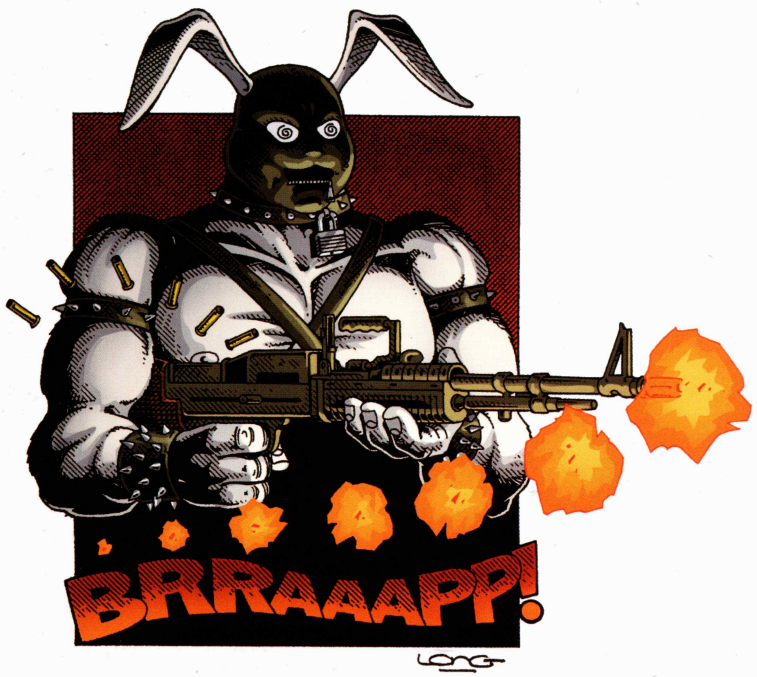
Bullwark laughs and clams up, but he is feeling terribly pressured - trapped like a rat...

Bullwark bursts into tears and confesses he isn't as tough and ruthless as people think. He's gotten in too deep and is terrified of the mutant animals. He claims to have been stupid and greedy. He sobs, pleading under his breath for forgiveness.

Then, terrified and desperate, he says, "Look, you didn't hear this from me, okay? Ya gotta promise they won't know I told ya!"

"They need the drugs to function right. They're junkies I guess. They haven't been looking none too good either. They're gettin' weak."

Bullwark's face goes from desperate to confident - it's plain to see he has decided to sell out the Ratt Pak to save his own skin, "They've got a new shipment comin' from that Magaldi Cartel midnight tomorrow night. The drop will happen on the Cosmoroids Special Effects Soundstage. You nab the junk an' they'll be hurtin' bad. Real bad. If you're looking to duke it out with 'em, this'll be your chance."



GAME MASTER NOTE

This is just to reiterate that Bullwark's confession is all an act to save himself. His attitude is "better the Ratt Pak goes down than me." He is a ruthless cutthroat and master con artist.

If Bullwark is arrested or manages to disappear without a trace, the Ratt Pak assumes things have gone bad and simply make a deal with another producer. Humans are expendable to Labb Ratt.

LOOKING FOR THE DRUG FACTORY

Careful analysis indicates an old seldom-used soundstage near the outdoor sets is the most likely candidate for being either the Ratt Pak's headquarters or a drug factory. The building is a large rectangular structure resembling an airplane hangar, and off-limits to all studio personnel. Mr. Darkins is certain this is it! He insists on coming along and can't be dissuaded. It may be best to bring him along anyway, in case the thugs try to abduct him again.

Going to investigate the structure leads into an adventure. The building looks deserted, but characters with tracking abilities recognize that people have been coming and going here often. There are signs of use only an hour old.

Inside, the building seems empty, with huge open expanses where sets can be built. The ceiling in these areas is 60 feet high. Toward the rear are the storage areas and dressing rooms. The lights do not work in this portion of the building. Checking the fuse box (assuming it can be found) reveals it has been destroyed. There are no windows, so the rooms are all very dark. Visibility is poor unless the characters have a flashlight, special optics, or the ability to see in the dark. Mr. Darkins anticipated this and has a high-beam flashlight as well as a pen light.

There is a garage at the very end. It contains two motorcycles, three SUVs, and a luxury sports car. All the vehicles are new.

GRIM TIDINGS

The smaller adjoining rooms are offices, a cafeteria, storage rooms, and the drug lab. Each of these various rooms are being used by Bullwark's criminal network of drug dealers.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS

You quickly realize the dark rooms look like they were hit by a tornado. Papers are scattered everywhere. Furniture is overturned and broken and equipment has been smashed. Here and there are the beaten and unconscious bodies of the drug ring's crew. Everyone from thug guards to chemists are unconscious or worse. It is obvious that the factory has been ravaged in just the last hour or less!

The drug laboratory is the hardest hit, with a dozen unconscious people lying on the floor and a couple

others who appear to be gravely injured. Even minor equipment has been smashed to bits. Painted on the wall, in what seems to be blood, is a chilling message:

I want the Subliminal Message Generator.

I will not be so pleasant next time if you choose to refuse this final request.

- The Shredder

On closer inspection, you can see that the message is painted in some sort of chemical, not blood. Just as our you breathe a sigh of relief, you come under attack by Shredder's Foot Clan ninja.

"You still choose to refuse the Master. For this, Bullwark, you and your mutant stooges must suffer!" shouts one of the Foot.

"Tell Labb Ratt that all who oppose the Foot are crushed under its heel!" cries another.

The Foot Clan Ninja *wrongly* assume that any mutant animal characters — including the heroes — are members of the Ratt Pak! Non-mutant heroes and allies are *mistaken* to be members of Bullwark's drug organization. Both are targets the Foot want to teach a lesson to.

For the most part, the ninja are silent and deadly, breaking the quiet with an occasional battle cry or whoosh of a kick.

They are armed with conventional martial arts weapons such as katana (2D6 damage), kusarigama (1D10), and nunchaku (1D8). They fight to humiliate, not kill, but have no qualms about using lethal measures if things get rough.

There is one Foot Clan Ninja for each hero, plus three additional waiting in the shadows. If a hero seems especially tough, the waiting ninja fight two-on-one against them.

If the heroes are winning, the ninja retreat, disappearing into the shadows. No amount of persuasion can force a ninja captive to talk. Mind probes only confirm that Shredder wants the SMG and will go to any lengths to get it.

The heroes can call in an anonymous tip to the police about the drug factory. There is plenty of evidence to get everybody found on the premises charged for operating an illegal drug operation. Of course, this may send Bullwark up the river too. That is ultimately a good thing, but it makes the Ratt Pak extremely jumpy. The only thing that keeps the Pak tied to Monolithic Studio is the drug drop later tonight. After they get their chemicals they'll consider looking for a new place to operate from.

LOOKING FOR THE RATT PAK'S LAIR

The heroes have looked high and low, covered every nook and cranny, and still the mutants cannot be found. Presumably, they are not hiding on the Monolithic Studio grounds.

Tracking the Pak to their lair is unlikely, but possible. Of that should happen, the Ratt Pak fights to the bitter end. They are joined by five of Brain Drain's spider robot drones.

Unless the heroes have a stroke of luck or genius and discover the lair, skip to *Reel 5: Battle Beyond the Soundstage.*

It is also possible that they discover the lair in the aftermath following Reel 5, given more time to track down loose ends.

GAME MASTER NOTE

THE SECRET LAIR

The Ratt Pak's lair is hidden in a completely sealed underground bunker that was built in the 1950s as a fallout shelter. The shelter is accessible only from the basement of Bullwark's office building. The huge iron and lead doors are locked and barred from the inside (SDC 1500). The only way in or out is through Brain Drain's teleport device or by smashing through the doors. The shelter has been long forgotten, even by Bullwark (he doesn't even know they are there), and covered by heaps of old stage props and boxes. Consequently, only the most thorough search could have a chance to uncover it, and even then would take many hours.

The chamber is spacious, designed to accommodate 100 people. It has its own electrical generator, water tank, and air ventilation system. The space is divided into a large central chamber, a large storage area, a kitchen and food storage area (now used by Brain Drain as his laboratory), and three smaller rooms and offices (being used as living quarters by the Ratt Pak).

Labb Ratt and friends have the large chamber turned into a sort of quaint family room, complete with big screen TV, stereo system, pool table, and furniture. The large storage area is filled with wires and machinery. This is Brain Drain's crude teleportation device. Whenever one of the villains teleports he ends up here; the teleportation system is basically *one-way* - whoever activates one of Brain Drain's teleportation retrieval devices is instantly transported *back* to the shelter up to 500 miles (805 km) away. However, the device cannot teleport them more than 100 feet (30 meters) away from the shelter, which is only good enough to teleport them into the basement or to a floor or two above them. Nobody pays much attention to odd creatures at a movie studio.

The last six Subliminal Message Generators can also be found in the lair. Brain Drain personally protects his masterpieces. If the heroes find the SMGs, they have to decide what to do with them. The wisest solution is to destroy them so that they do not fall into the wrong hands (the plans are only in Brain Drain's head; there are no blueprints and nothing is written down). Give an bonus of 100 XP for this decision.

ITEMS IN THE LAIR

- a few years worth of canned or dehydrated food
- the Ratt Pak's personal items
- two pounds of illegal street drugs
- four pounds of Blue Ice
- $30,000 dollars in 50 dollar bills
- $20,000 in 100 dollar bills
- six survival knives
- three .38 revolvers
- three 9mm pistols
- two Uzi submachine guns
- 1D4×100 extra rounds of 9mm ammunition
- five spider robots (unless they are destroyed while invading)
- 1D4 extra teleporter transceiver remotes

LONG

REEL 5: BATTLE BEYOND THE SOUNDSTAGE

One way or another, our heroes end up on the set of the Cosmoroids movie at midnight for the big showdown.

If they've been clever and inventive they have learned about the drop already, and further evidence just confirms their information. Either way, Vincent Darkins passes this info along.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Vincent Darkins contacts you saying, "Hey, I've got something big here. One of my people overheard two of Bullwark's stooges talking."
>
> "It seems that some Magaldi Cartel boys are going to make some kind of 'drop' tonight, right here, at the Cosmoroids set. Midnight. The name Labb Ratt was mentioned too. Apparently the drop is for him."
>
> "I'm a regular Sherlock Holmes!"

Even with just this clue, the heroes should be able to surmise that the drop is another mutagenic drug shipment. If that is the case, they know White Rabbit or Space Case will definitely be there. If they know that the Ratt Pak needs the chemicals desperately, they have every reason to anticipate the presence of the whole gang.

GAME MASTER NOTE
INVOLVING THE CLUELESS

If the heroes missed all the clues, they can *still* get involved in the fight when they hear noise on the closed movie set. Remember, they're probably using the soundstage as their headquarters, and it is certainly the locale for meeting with Mr. Darkins.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

PRE-BATTLE WARM-UP

This is it, the big confrontation! This scene includes the showdown with the Ratt Pak, and the return of Shredder. (Didn't think he'd stay away long, did you?)

Magaldi Cartel goons are due to deliver the Ratt Pak's mutagenic drug shipment at midnight on the Cosmoroids soundstage. Shredder has learned this and intends to intercept the drugs. He'll then use them to blackmail the Ratt Pak into giving him the Subliminal Message Generator technology.

11:30 PM - THE HEROES ARRIVE

The Cosmoroids soundstage is a huge, warehouse-sized, building filled with huge set pieces, forklifts, monstrous props, mobile camera platforms, and oversized starship models. The cast and crew have all gone home. The equipment sits idle. It's all very still and quiet. Any pre-fight plans on the part of our heroes should be done now, before another second in game-time ticks by. Preparations can include checking out the controls on the starship models, forklifts, and mobile camera platforms. Remember, they may have seen or been shown how to operate these items in an earlier adventure. Presumably, the players place their characters in strategic locations and silently wait. **Note:** A lot of noise after 11:30 p.m. will alert the bad guys to their presence.

11:50 PM - THE FOOT ARRIVES

Out of the corners of their eyes, the heroes see the shadows come to life as a dozen ninja silently prowl along the set. Shredder is there, although he and a few more ninja are hanging back and cannot be seen yet. The twelve Foot sneak onto the Cosmoroids soundstage in pairs and position themselves for an ambush.

If the heroes are already in position and remain quiet, they can ambush the dozen Foot Clan warriors as they come in.

Or the heroes can stay hidden, and watch and see what transpires next.

11:59 PM - THE CARTEL ARRIVES

"I'm telling ya we're early. That's why nobody's here yet", says a big, burly thug to a smaller guy carrying a large, black attaché case. "Shut up and keep your eyes open. You know what happened back at Malibu." They are jumpy and look ready for trouble. Two more Cartel goons, armed with shotguns, take a defensive position behind some props about 10 yards/meters away.

If the heroes do not attack them, the Ratt Pak shows up at midnight to make the transaction. At that moment the Foot ninja attack.

If the heroes attack the goons now and try to run off with the drugs, the Foot leaps out and attacks both the heroes and the Magaldi Cartel thugs. If the heroes ambushed all twelve ninja known to them, then only Shredder and four additional Foot attack.

One minute later, the Ratt Pak arrive and jumps into the fray.

12:00 MIDNIGHT - THE RATT PAK ARRIVES

As stated previously, the Ratt Pak immediately jumps into any ongoing battle. They hate the rival Foot organization and loathe our meddlesome heroes. They relish revenge on both groups. Of course, any surviving Cartel goons fight alongside the Ratt Pak. This is a winner-takes-all battle to the finish.

Another possibility is that Shredder has defeated the thugs and the heroes remain hidden. This means he has the drugs. When the Ratt Pak arrives he mocks them and tries to blackmail them into giving him the Subliminal Message Generator technology and forbids them to give the SMG device to anyone else. Shredder wants a monopoly on this gizmo. "I have a new bargain for you. The drugs are mine until you give me your invention." The Ratt Pak answers by attacking.

The heroes can jump in at any time. The suspense has built to its height. This is the perfect time for the crime fighters to make their presence known.

THE BIG FIGHT

Everyone wants the case with the drugs, especially the Ratt Pak. Make it clear to the players that it is critical that no member of the Ratt Pak gets ahold of the mutagenic drugs, because as soon as they do, they will escape by teleporting away. If this happens the heroes will have to track them down, either to their lair or lure them out again for a final battle. Consequently, the person who has the drugs will be the primary target of the Ratt Pak

and Shredder (Shredder is likely to be the guy who has it at the moment). If the drugs are knocked loose, everybody will leap for it; four Foot ninja run to get the attaché case. The Ratt Pak move to intercept them. The Cartel goons draw their guns and start shooting. White Rabbit and Lounge Lizard dive to grab the case first. And what about our heroes? Everybody wants the attaché case, and they are willing to kill for it.

One safe way to make certain that the Ratt Pak does not get the drugs is to destroy them. Blowing up or blasting the attaché case to smithereens gets the job done (total package has an SDC of 25). The downside to this is that it enrages Shredder, who now directs his attacks at the hero(s) responsible, and it sends the Ratt Pak into a berserker frenzy aimed at them as well.

Shredder eventually flees if it looks like his scheme is ruined (he *will* seek revenge later).

The Ratt Pak, as noted previously, fight to the finish, but only if they can not get the mutagenic drugs. If they get the drugs they vanish. If they lose the drugs they fight like madmen until slain or subdued. Why? Because they desperately need these rare and expensive drugs to maintain their humanoid forms and intelligence. Without them, they are slowly changing back into ordinary animals.

The degeneration process has already begun! If the villains did not get the Malibu shipment they are hurting badly. They are smaller and more animal-like in appearance than ever before. Likewise, their intelligence and other human attributes are fading (*See each villain's description; use the third set of attribute stats and reduce hit points and SDC by half!*) If the Ratt Pak did get the Malibu shipment, they will only be minorly diminished (*use the second set of stats and reduce hit points and SDC by 10%*).

GAME MASTER TIPS - RUNNING THE FIGHT

RUNNING A CAST OF DOZENS

In game-mastering the three-way fight, it is *not* necessary to roll the attacks that do not involve the player characters. Just describe the rest of the action to the players as Shredder and the Foot attack any of the Magaldi Cartel henchmen or Ratt Pak members. Describe White Rabbit warping the minds of the Foot, Lounge Lizard making them attack one another, Space Case draining their attacks, and Labb Ratt causing them great pain.

DESCRIBE THE ACTION CLEARLY

Remember, it is always important to clearly describe the action so that the players have a concise idea of what is going on. As Game Master, you may have to momentarily stop the action and summarize who is fighting who, where specific characters are located, ranges, weapons, etc. It may even be helpful to draw a quick and *simple* map showing some specific locations and character positions. Running a big battle with a dozen or more antagonists can be confusing, especially since the players don't know everything that the Game Master knows.

THE CHANGE IN THE RATT PAK

During the fight, make a point of letting the characters know how much weaker the Ratt Pak members are than they were when they fought them before. This is a key element to the story. If a player makes a point of observing the enemy, clue him or her in on other related data, like the mutants' more animal-like behavior and appearance, smaller size, fewer actions per round, indications of limited abilities to reason, etc. If a hero figures out that the Ratt Pak weakens the longer they go without their drugs, award 75 bonus Experience Points (XP). Of course, you should provide little hints about their appearance and reduced abilities, but if the players' don't take the hint, keep quiet about further details.

For Example: "You turn to face the lumbering giant, White Rabbit. He's got that crazy look in his eyes, but somehow he doesn't seem as big or as menacing as he did the last time you saw him." When asked to describe him further, say something like, "He appears to be at least six inches shorter, and furrier. His ears are more pronounced and he grunts and snarls more than he talks." If the heroes have seen him fight before, you may continue and say, "His reflexes seem slower too, but he's still a handful!"

Lounge Lizard may be described as being "more reptilian, and he speaks with an obvious slur." And so on.

USING THE MOVIE SET EQUIPMENT

The heroes may be greatly outnumbered or overpowered in this encounter. But there are a lot of unique pieces of equipment they can use to even the odds.

FORKLIFT

As an action a hero can make a Pilot: Automobile skill roll (-25% penalty) to ram a foe (4D6 damage, the target is knocked prone losing the Initiative and their next action), or drop a heavy object on them (6D6 damage, can only be done once before needing to spend an action to pick up another object).

MOBILE CAMERA PLATFORMS

The mobile camera platforms are large vehicles with long mechanical arms with a mounted camera used to get tracking shots, but as an action the arm can be used to bash an opponent (3D6 damage) up to 15 feet (5 m) away.

REMOTE CONTROL SPACESHIP MODELS

Controlling the mechanical spaceships requires a bit of dexterity and concentration. Characters cannot pilot a remote-control spaceship and engage in fighting simultaneously; the drone becomes the hero's weapon. Characters with a PP attribute of 10 or less are -3 to strike. Those with a PP of 11 to 15 are -1 to strike and those with a PP of 16 or higher are +1 to strike with the remote. A miss means the starship careens off wildly. A successful strike means the starship slams into their foe (5D6 damage, the target is knocked down and loses their next action). Or it can swoop in, snag the target, and carry it off up to 50 feet (15 m) away before dropping it/them; damage is 2D6, but the snagged victim who is carried off also loses their next two actions.

It is also possible for one character to pilot the model and for another to ride on top of it, bashing opponents as he swooshes by. Add +1D6 to all punches, kicks, swords, and similar physical melee attacks due to the momentum of the moving model.

The person riding the model spaceship loses one action because of the effort to hold on or balance atop the model, and each time they are attacked they must roll a Parry of 10 or higher or else fall off of the spaceship model (only 1D4 damage from the fall). **Note:** Targets are all -2 to strike, parry, and dodge because they must maneuver to avoid being clipped by the model.

SET
5

Combat Example: *"The ponderous starship model sways precariously beneath your feet, but holds firm. From your vantage point, you have a clear view of the Foot and Ratt Pak combatants running amok on the soundstage. Your buddy nods and sends the toy ship careening into the midst of them. Your first target is an unsuspecting Foot ninja. He turns and swings his sword (rolls a 9 to strike, -2, for a 7 to strike), you automatically try to Parry his attack and block it with a roll of 9.*

Before you can attack you must roll another parry to keep your balance (a 10 or higher). You roll a 12! Your feet firmly planted, you clobber him with your club, doing 1D8 (+1D6 momentum bonus) plus any damage bonus the attacker may have from combat skills or attributes. The ninja takes 10 points of damage as you swoosh past him toward your next foe, a thug armed with a pistol.

He starts to shoot and rolls a 15 to hit (-2 penalty, for a 13). You must roll a successful Dodge or his shot hits. You roll a 14 to Dodge so he misses, but you must again roll a Parry to see if you maintain your balance. You need to roll a 10 or better, but even with combat skill modifiers, you roll a measly 8. The ship keeps going, but you have fallen off and tumble to the ground (roll 1D4 damage). Now you stand in the middle of the battle. Oh well, it was a good try, and cool while it lasted! Combat continues..."

HEROES TRIUMPHANT

Our heroes stand over the defeated Ratt Pak as victors of the battle. **(GM Note**: Shredder may be among the defeated foes or may have escaped during the battle.)

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

While you rest a second, contemplating your next actions, you notice the mutants shrinking slightly and becoming more animal-like in appearance before your very eyes!

Labb Ratt regains consciousness, at least for the moment, squints his beady eyes at you, and says, "So, at last you learn our terrible secret. Without those precious chemicals we are just animals. But it is not too late for us yet. You can help us.

"Come, come. You're mutants just like us (this includes humans with unusual abilities). What has the world ever offered you but grief and misery? You owe them nothing! But the humans owe you EVERYTHING! We... yes, you and us, are a newer and better form of life!

"We are siblings, you and I. We are fellow mutants! The world has no need of us. They hate and fear us. And we have no need of them. We are superior beings in every way! Why should we have to run and hide in the bowels of their teeming cities? They should bow to you as they make animals bow to them!

"We can control the humans. If you stand with us, you shall control them too. You can live as kings. Emperors! Join us."

There is no reason for the heroes to pretend to join with the Pak, so they are likely to indicate some form of refusal to join them. Labb Ratt becomes irate:

"You fools would damn us to a life as stupid, innocent ANIMALS! We won't stand for it. You think you've beaten us, but we'll destroy you too. We'll tell the world of your existence - we will tell the public all about you!

"You won't be able to take a step without reporters breathing down your necks everywhere you go. You have no citizenship, and therefore, no rights. The FBI will be very INTERESTED to know that a bunch of mutant vigilantes are operating covertly inside the country. And every scientist in the world will fight to get a chance to dissect you! HaHaHaHaHaHah-hhhhhaaaaa!

"Oh, the police may hold us, but we'll call a press conference and prove your existence to the world tomorrow morning. We'll use all the press and public relations resources of Monolithic Studios to make sure the entire world knows of you, Bullwark will see to that - we'll have our revenge! Deliver a new batch of the mutagenic drugs to us before the press conference tomorrow morning and your secret will be safe. Betray us, brothers, and we'll destroy you."

He snarls, "If we go down, you go down!" and then loses consciousness.

Darkins has already called the police, who should arrive within minutes.

The heroes actually have a lot of options. Depending on how they conducted themselves through the previous adventures, they may not have drawn any attention to themselves, or left little or no evidence of their part in this affair. Likewise, if the heroes are well known and respected by the public, Labb Ratt's accusations may mean nothing.

Even if the supposed press conference happens, is the public going to believe the Ratt Pak? Furthermore, the heroes can get out of town before the police and the public can react. Vincent Darkins helps them in every way possible with cash, a car, and friendship. Personally, he doubts that the police would allow such a press conference to happen.

GAME MASTER NOTE

See *Loose Ends: If the Heroes are Defeated* on page 180 below if the team doesn't triumph in the Battle Beyond the Soundstage.

THE FINAL REEL

Vincent Darkins was wrong. The media is abuzz with the upcoming press conference.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS

The courthouse is crowded the next morning. Excitement cuts through the air like electricity. A huge crowd of reporters, news teams, and curiosity seekers mill around the stairs of the Monolithic Movie Theatre, where a large speaker's platform has been set up.

The Ratt Pak's attorney speaks first, "Ladies and gentlemen, we've called you here to discuss something far more serious than movies. We're here to discuss a mysterious threat that is lurking beneath the city streets, and prowling through the shadows. There are mutated creatures. Covert operatives with unusual powers and training. Their motives unknown."

A laugh goes through the audience.

"It's true!" He then gives the speaker's platform over to Labb Rat who is dressed in a hooded robe.

"Silence, it is true. I know, because I am a mutant animal as well!" He pulls off his hood to reveal his rat face, much more animal-like than before. The crowd gasps in horror. A stunned silence falls over the crowd.

Suddenly, Labb Ratt squeals in agony. "Noooooooo! Not now. Not yet!"

Like something out of a horror flick, the mutant rat begins to shrink. The entire transformation is over in a minute. Only a normal grey rat wiggles in the robe where Labb Ratt stood only moments ago.

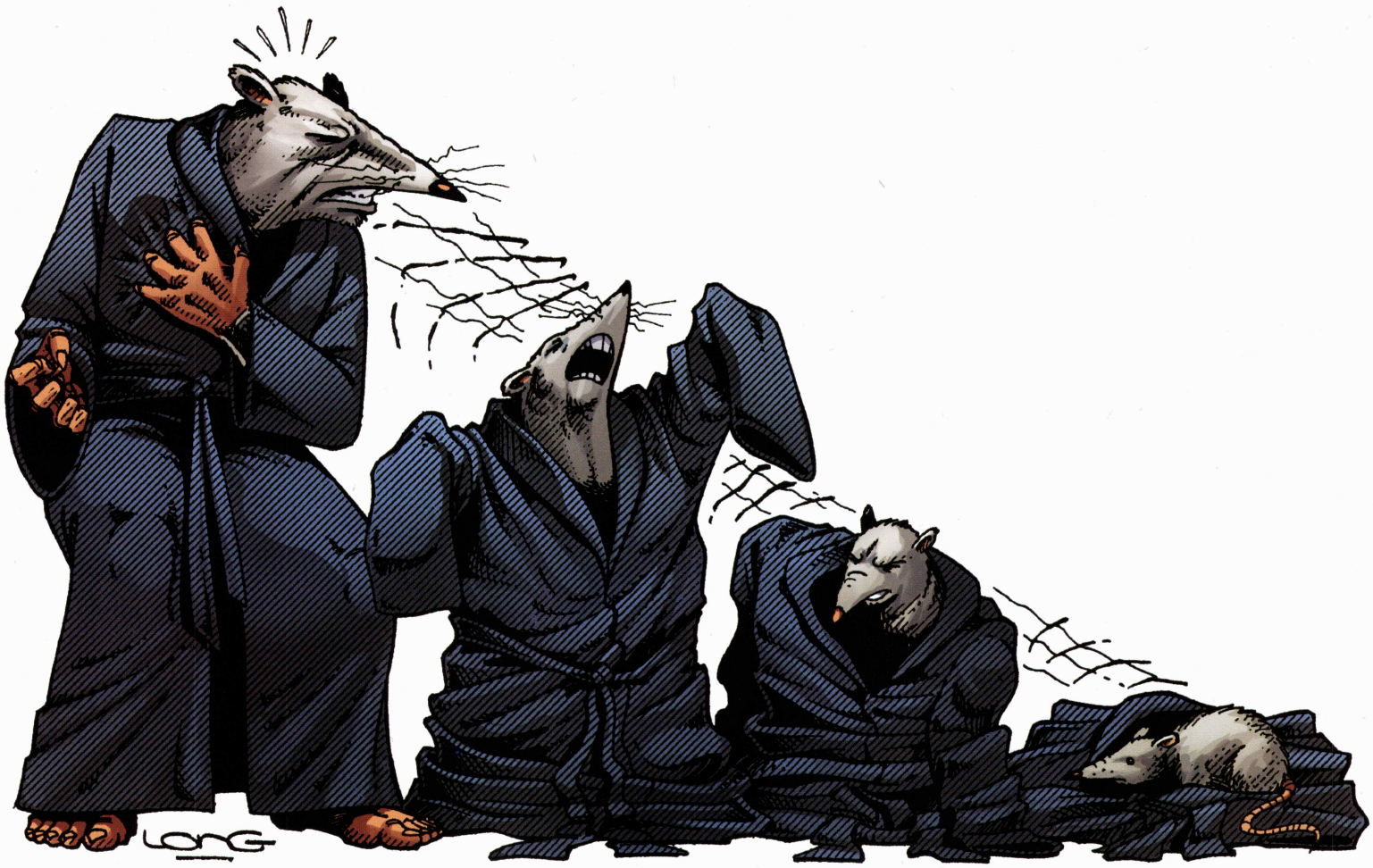
The crowd goes wild. Some scream. Some run for their lives. Others stand transfixed by what they see. A few are clapping, thinking it is a special effect.

Later, there are reports of mass confusion as similar transformations claimed the other prisoners. The media have a mixed response, but most decide it was all just an elaborate publicity hoax.

This story is over. Roll credits...

THE WRAP-UP

After the press conference, the reporters go home. Monolithic Studios is temporarily closed down pending a full investigation. **Mr. Bullwark** is under investigation (if he is not already in police custody) for charges of manufacturing and distributing illegal substances, conspiracy, money laundering, aiding and abetting illegal activity (including murder), and several other charges. New information about Mr. Bullwark seems to be coming out hourly on the news and internet.



Despite the criminal investigation, **director Vincent Darkins** is confident that the studio will be up and running again soon. Darkins thanks the heroes for all their efforts.

Before they leave Hollywood he throws a private party in their honor and offers them the use of his private estate to rest and recuperate. "Why not? I've got nothing to do for the next month or so. It will be fun." Whether the characters take Darkins up on his offer is up to the players. When they leave, he bids them a fond farewell, and invites them to visit him any time. If nothing else, Darkins is a valuable ally and a good friend.

LOOSE ENDS

IF THE HEROES ARE DEFEATED

If the heroes are defeated on the set of the Cosmoroids, the Ratt Pak return to their lair to reorganize. The Ratt Pak is too crazed to stop and see if the heroes are dead, or to give much time to characters in hiding or in retreat. Without this shipment of mutagen, they are doomed. Even if Shredder obtains the mutagen, they don't trust him and won't make a deal.

The Ratt Pak makes one last bid to the Magaldi Cartel. The Cartel is reluctant, but agrees to try to get them the chemicals one last time - the price: the Subliminal Message Generator technology and the loyal service of the Ratt Pak for five years.

Our heroes have only 12 hours to recover before they are needed again. Around 11:00 a.m. the next day, they learn that the Ratt Pak is attempting another drug drop in just a few hours. The place: Bullwark's beach home, 35 miles (56 km) away. The time: 1:00 p.m. If they don't take more than 20 minutes to get ready, they can be there in less than an hour. The information is too easily attained and a trap should be suspected. However, they have little recourse but to act.

As their last stand, the Ratt Pak has let this info leak out so that they can get revenge on the group of vigilantes. The drugs are really to arrive that morning between 10 and 11. However, something goes wrong and the drugs are late. The heroes arrive before the drugs as long as they arrive by 1:20 p.m. The Ratt Pak lay in wait. If they must lose their human intelligence, a fate worse than death, then they want to send those responsible to the grave!

The Ratt Pak attacks shortly after the heroes arrive. They look horrible. **White Rabbit** has little intelligence or memory left. He stands only 6 feet tall and is on a leash controlled by a mangy looking Labb Ratt. His weapons are a kusarigama (1D10 damage) and a battle axe (2D6 damage); he's forgotten how to use a gun. **Labb Ratt** is much more rodent-like and smaller. He is losing his intellect but is still cunning and smart enough to be dangerous. He is armed with an submachine gun and two hand grenades.

Space Case is also pretty far gone. She moves with the speed and agility of a cat, but does so on all fours. By this point, she has lost her psionic powers and is limited to physical attacks only. She uses only her claws; 1D6+2 damage. **Lounge Lizard** hisses and slithers around like a giant lizard. He can barely talk, but still retains his mutant powers and significant intelligence to make him deadly. **Brain Drain** looks pretty much the same but his movements are slow and uncertain (only two actions per round and no bonuses of any kind).

GAME MASTER NOTE

THE END OF THE LINE

This is absolutely the final battle. Play it out for as much drama as possible. In the end, whether the Ratt Pak has been defeated or if they are about to deliver the final blow to our heroes, they suddenly shrink into normal animals. The frightening transition lasts less than one minute. During that time they cannot attack.

Afterwards, the animals are easily collected and can turned over to the authorities (anonymously if necessary), or let run free. Slaughtering them is a bit pointless and cruel.

IF THE RATT PAK LAIR IS UNDISCOVERED

If the Ratt Pak's lair was never found then a few of the Subliminal Message Generator (SMG) devices are still there, guarded by five of Brain Drain's spider robots that will recharge themselves and lie in wait for many years before they break down.

With luck, the lair will never be rediscovered. The characters should consider this a success, although it does leave a loose end, especially if...

IF THE RATT PAK RETURN

What's that? You say you liked these villains and wish they could return again someday? Well, who says they can't?

Here are some ways that the Pak can come back:

- The Magaldi Cartel (as well as Shredder) knows a little something about these animals and the role the mutagenic drugs play in their lives. If they didn't know how the drugs affected them, they certainly can piece the puzzle together now! They speak with crime boss Frederick Porcelain and track down his scientist who accidentally created the mutant animals in the first place. They inform the Cartel that the Ratt Pak's creation was an accident and has not been duplicated since. However, the mutation *may* reoccur when the drugs are injected back into the *same* animals. It is a minimal effort to secure the animals that were once the mutant Ratt Pak. Surprise, surprise, the scientist was right, the mutagenic drugs do give birth to the Ratt Pak.
- Another possibility is that Labb Ratt still retains some of his humanoid memories and intelligence, even in his rat form! He is somehow able to communicate with an unscrupulous scientist and is re-created. Together they find and re-create the other mutants of the Ratt Pak.
- A third possibility is that the mutant brain that is Brain Drain is not as affected by the lack of the drugs due to his robotic nature. After a few days of playing possum, he breaks loose, rescues his animal buddies before they can be destroyed, and escapes. He contacts the Cartel and they help rebuild the Pak.

No matter which scenario you use (or design yourself), if they come back the Pak has a grudge to settle...

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

THE RATT PAK

ORIGIN STORY

While cooking up new designer drugs, Frederick Porcelain and the SoloChem gangsters experimented with unstable mutagenic chemicals, exposing a variety of laboratory animals to the radioactive drugs. They intended to create a new drug that was so addictive that it took only one or two uses to hook an individual. As a surprise bonus, they accidentally created a host of horribly mutated creatures with a keen, but wicked intelligence. These corrupted animals are the Ratt Pak: Labb Ratt, Lounge Lizard, White Rabbit, Brain Drain, and Space Case.

Led by the diabolical Labb Ratt, the Ratt Pak assisted the narcotics cartel in developing "Blue Ice" and quickly rose in the ranks of SoloChem as secret operatives. Soon they were given the freedom to develop their own projects. This led to an invention far worse than any drug. They created the infamous Subliminal Message Generator (SMG), capable of psionically addicting its viewers and ultimately subverting their wills.

THE RATT PAK GOES SOLO FROM SOLOCHEM

When the heroes attack the SoloChem fortress, the Ratt Pak doesn't help defend the building. Instead, they take advantage of the diversion to steal their Subliminal Message Generator and flee. This had all been part of their plans for quite a while. The intervention of the heroes only served to initiate that plan a little sooner than they had considered.

HOLLYWOOD

Labb Ratt and company had already organized a nice little drug operation in Los Angeles and Hollywood sanctioned by the Magaldi Cartel. They had also already established strong ties with unscrupulous movie mogul Lambert Bullwark, and made a pact to encode new movies with the powerful subliminal messages.

Everything is coming along wonderfully until Shredder discovers their plan, and tries to extort the Subliminal Message Generator technology. He has discovered the secret behind the mutagenic drugs and one of his tactics is to keep the Ratt Pak from getting the drugs they need to maintain their mutant forms. Things go from bad to worse when the heroes arrive and become involved.

PHYSICAL CHANGES MAY OCCUR DURING THE ADVENTURES

The Ratt Pak's statistics will change during the game. The creatures start out very strong, but as time passes and they remain deprived of their drugs, their bodies undergo severe changes. They weaken considerably with each phase. There are four Notable phases.

Phase One: FULL Strength. The Ratt Pak members start off at full power. They are smart, strong, and cunning. Each character description has three sets of stats. The first is the Ratt Pak at its strongest. As each phase occurs the villains' abilities grow weaker.

Phase Two: Medium Strength. By the Malibu encounter, the Pak needs a booster shot of mutagenic serum. They are in a somewhat weakened state, but still very formidable. Use the second list of stats.

Phase Three: Weakened Animal Regressive State. At this point the villains are quickly deteriorating. They look more like animals than humanoids. Speech and remembering are extremely difficult and size is reduced dramatically. Without a booster shot of the mutagenic drugs, they will revert completely back to animal form within 24 hours.

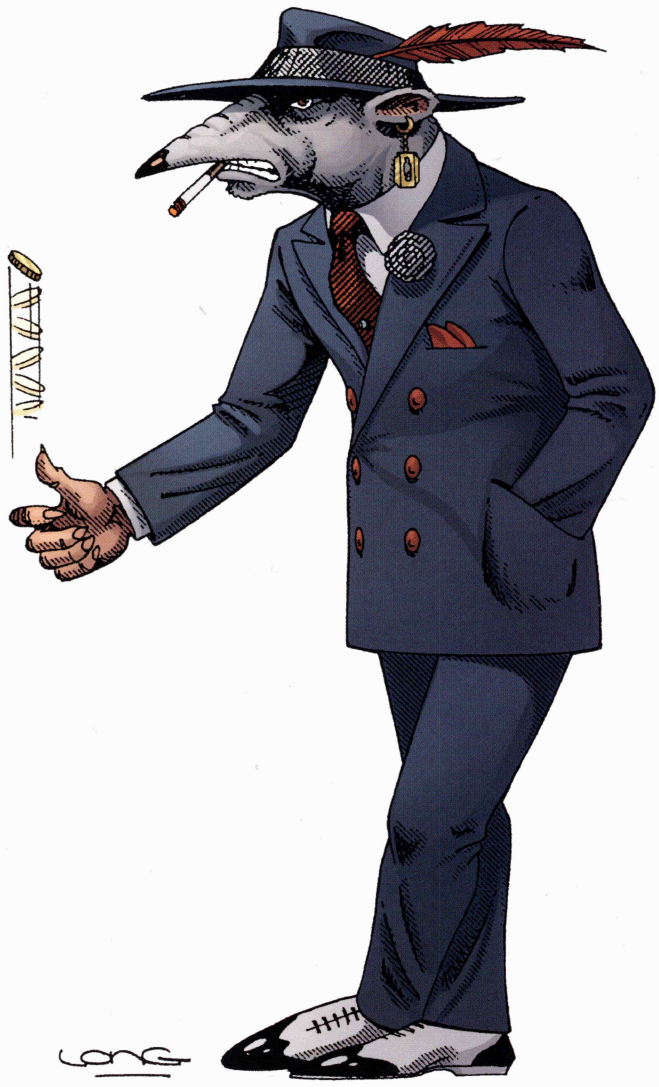
Phase Four: Complete Regression. In this state, the villains have regressed back into the animals they originally were. However, each is still a mutant and can be re-created if given the correct mutagenic drugs. Labb Ratt even retains some of his intelligence (IQ 6) and sparks of memory, as will Brain Drain. However, Labb Ratt's body is that of an adult two-foot long, rat. White Rabbit and the others have no human-like intelligence nor memories, although they're all a bit smarter than their animal kin.

LABB RATT

Alignment: Diabolic

Hit Points: Phase 1: 55, (36 phase 2), (22 phase 3), (5 phase 4)

SDC: Phase 1: 125, (85 phase 2), (55 phase 3), (2 phase 4)



Age: Has been humanoid for 16 months.

Sex: Male

Size Level: 7 (reduce to size level 5 by phase 3)

Average Weight: 110 lbs

Average Height: 5 ft, 4 inches; smaller only in phase 3.

Attributes in order of regression:

IQ 22, MA 27, ME 23, PS 18, PP 19, PE 22, PB 10, Spd 9

IQ 18, MA 21, ME 16, PS 12, PP 15, PE 17, PB 9, Spd 6

IQ 13, MA 14, ME 10, PS 8, PP 10, PE 13, PB 6, Spd 4

Level of Experience: Equal to 5th level

Combat Skills: Basic Combat Training

Actions Per Round: 4, (4), (2)

Bonuses: Phase One: +4 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +5 to Damage

Phase Two: +2 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +2 to Damage

Phase Three: +2 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +2 to Damage

Note: Includes combat skill bonuses.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun

Skills of Note: Pilot Automobile 68%, Prowl 75%, Mechanical Engineering 65%, Chemistry 70%, Analytical Chemistry 65%, Advanced Math 84%; PLUS +9% IQ bonus when in phase one.

Weapons: Model 61 Skorpion and 9mm Pistol.

Armor: None

Psionics: Bio-Manipulation: Pain, Detect Psionics, Hypnotic Suggestion, Mind Block, See Aura

Personal Profile: Labb Ratt is a thoroughly rotten, despicable creature who wants nothing less than complete domination over humans, turning people into cattle, beasts of burden, and house pets. His mind, which has been completely twisted by mutagenic drugs, is coldly calculating and inventive. He is a cruel and ruthless individual. He is a deceitful manipulator who would sell out anyone, with the possible exception of the Ratt Pak, to further his goals. Space Case is his girlfriend, which he sees as an ironic twist of irony and his superiority since she is a cat.

Note: Labb Ratt speaks in a low, cold, breathy voice.

WHITE RABBIT

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: Phase 1: 74, (65 phase 2), (40 phase 3), (6 phase 4)

SDC: Phase 1: 175, (135 phase 2), (80 phase 3), (2 phase 4)

Age: Has been a humanoid for 14 months

Sex: Male

Size Level: 14 (reduce to size level 9 by phase 3)

Weight: 382 lbs

Height: 7 ft, 6 inches

Attributes in order of regression

IQ 13, MA 16, ME 20, PS 22, PP 22, PE 20, PB 13, Spd 12

IQ 10, MA 13, ME 17, PS 19, PP 18, PE 17, PB 10, Spd 8

IQ 7, MA 10, ME 14, PS 16, PP 12, PE 13, PB 7, Spd 4

Experience Level: Equal to sixth level martial artist

Combat Skills: Martial Arts Combat Training

Actions Per Round: 5, (4), (4)

Bonuses: Phase One: +7 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +7 to Damage

Phase Two: +5 to Strike, Parry and Dodge, +4 to Damage

Phase Three: +3 to Strike, Parry and Dodge, +1 to Damage

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Machinegun, WP Rifle, WP Submachine Gun, WP Sword, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Paired Weapons, WP Targeting (Shuriken, Knives). Add +2 to Strike and Parry with any of these weapons.

Skills of Note: Pilot Automobile 34%, Prowl 75%, Tracking 55%

Weapons: M-60 Machine Gun (6D6 damage per round/bullet), Mini-Uzi (2D6 damage per round), AR-15 Assault Rifle (4D6 per round), Kusarigama (1D8 damage), 10 Shuriken (1D4 damage each), and a Knife (1D6 damage).

Armor: None

Psionics: Mind Trap: Reality Warp, Mind Block

Personal Profile: White Rabbit is an unstable killing machine. He fights with cold fury. He says little, except to utter threats. He's deathly afraid of water, and if he's drenched he'll waste an attack shaking himself dry. If he is thrown into water, he will lose his whole round of attacks, panicking, getting out, and shaking dry.

He obeys Labb Ratt implicitly. His friends include Space Case and Brain Drain. If something happens to them he will go berserk. He does not like Lounge Lizard but tolerates him because Labb Ratt tells him to.

Special Power - Reality Warp: White Rabbit has a very powerful form of Mind Trap that is usable on as many as *four* people simultaneously. The Mutagenic drugs in his system give him the ability to distort the perceptions of others. He broadcasts waves of weird mind-distorting energies which twist the perceptions of everyone within twenty feet of him.

The Reality Warp causes ALL people within 20 feet (6.1 meters) of White Rabbit to become confused. They must roll a Psionic save each and every round. If they fail, all attack, parry, dodge, and damage bonuses are at *half*. Likewise, each person's speed and skill proficiency levels are also halved, due to the disorienting nature of the mind attack. Victims also lose one action per round.

An example of a Reality Warp: "Suddenly, White Rabbit begins to shift and mutate, his face swirling off in a spiral. Then you notice it's not just White Rabbit changing, but everything around you is moving, swirling, and undulating. You smell a noxious blend of ozone and gunpowder in the air. Try as hard as you can, you can't shake the disorientation."

Reality Warp is a wild talent that engages automatically whenever he is involved in combat, without White Rabbit even thinking about it. He can't create any other mind trap illusions except for the Reality Warp.

SPACE CASE

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: Phase 1: 62, (40 phase 2), (25 phase 3), (5 phase 4)

SDC: Phase 1: 100, (80 phase 2), (40 phase 3), (3 phase 4)

Age: Has been a humanoid for 13 months

Sex: Female

Size Level: 8 **Weight:** 115 lbs

Height: 5 ft, 5 inches

Attributes in order of regression

IQ 16, MA 23, ME 20, PS 18, PP 19, PE 18, PB 20, Spd 17

IQ 13, MA 19, ME 16, PS 15, PP 16, PE 15, PB 17, Spd 16

IQ 10, MA 15, ME 12, PS 12, PP 13, PE 12, PB 15, Spd 15

Experience Level: Equal to 4th level

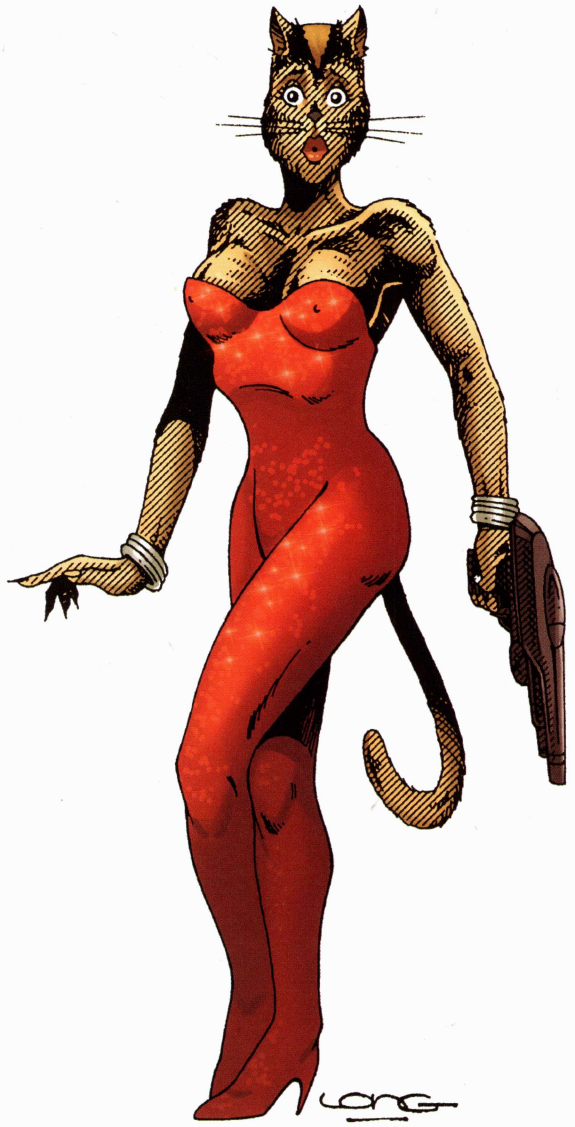
Combat Skill: Basic Hand to Hand

Actions Per Round: 4, (4), (2)

Bonuses: Phase One: +4 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +3 to Damage

Phase Two: +3 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +0 to Damage

Phase Three: +2 to Strike, Parry, Dodge, +0 to Damage



Weapon Proficiencies: WP Handgun, WP Sword

Skills of Note: Pilot Auto. 96%, Prowl 70%, Paramedic 62%

Weapons: Lady-like, Pearl-handled .38 Revolver; also has retractable claws (animal power) that inflict 2D6 damage!

Armor: None

Psionic Powers: Special form of Bio-Manipulation: Stun (Space Out), Mind Block

Personal Profile: Space Case is a bubble-headed Valley Girl. She purrs when she talks and looks soft and lovable. She has a short attention span and tends to space out during conversations, then giggles as if blanking out were hysterically funny. Her foolish behavior stands in stark contrast to her combat abilities. She is a natural and deadly predator who stalks her prey silently and attacks without warning using her retractable claws. She uses her innocent and helpless demeanor as a ploy to lure her victim into a sense of ease, then lashes out for the kill.

Special Power - Space Out: Space Case has a unique form of Bio-Manipulation: Stun that allows her to attack multiple foes at the same time, resulting in a cumulative loss of actions. Each round she can use her psionic power up to 100 feet (30.5 meters) away from her and can affect up to 20 targets as long as she can see them. Victims of the attack must save vs. Psionics or lose one

action per round - the action *does not* return in the next round, but remains gone until the character moves out of range or until she cancels her psionic influence. The victim feels sluggish and dizzy; however, unlike the normal Bio-Manipulation: Stun, the victim does *not* have a -4 to strike, parry, and dodge.

She can use her Space Out powers again next round to try to affect those who saved the previous round and to reduce the attacks of those already affected even more. Everybody rolls to save vs psionics again. If those who lost one action last time fail to save again, they lose another action. This can be repeated until the individual has only ONE melee attack. **Note:** She can direct her powers at specific individuals. Space Case's powers are accompanied by the smell of perfume mixed with animal musk.

"Like, Omigod! I never, like, noticed what a totally cool katana I have!"

LOUNGE LIZARD

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: Phase 1: 44, (32 phase 2), (25 phase 3), (6 phase 4)

SDC: Phase 1: 125, (65 phase 2), (40 phase 3), (5 phase 4)

Age: Has been a humanoid for 16 months

Sex: Male

Size Level: 10 (reduce to size level 7 by phase 3)

Average Weight: 190 lbs

Average Height: 6 ft, 2 inches; smaller only in phase three.

Attributes in order of regression:

IQ 16, MA 22, ME 20, PS 18, PP 19, PE 15, PB 11, Spd 15

IQ 12, MA 17, ME 15, PS 16, PP 15, PE 12, PB 11, Spd 11

IQ 8, MA 13, ME 11, PS 11, PP 12, PE 10, PB 10, Spd 7

Experience Level: Equal to 5th level

Combat Skills: Expert Combat Training

Actions Per Round: 4, (4), (2)

Bonuses: Phase One: +5 to strike, +4 to Parry. Dodge, +3 Damage

Phase Two: +3 to strike, +2 to Parry and Dodge, +1 Damage

Phase Three: +3 to strike, +2 to Parry and Dodge, +0 Damage

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Automatic Pistol, WP Submachine Gun, WP Rifle, and WP Knife.

Skills of Note: Pilot Auto. 92%, Prowl 66%, Basic Mechanics 60%, Sing (professional quality) 60%, Play Piano 60%

Weapons: Uzi (3D6 damage), .38 Revolver (2D6 damage)

Armor: None

Psionics: Hypnotic Suggestion, Mind Trap, Mind Block, See Aura

Personal Profile: Lounge Lizard is a cold-blooded sadist. He is quiet and sophisticated. Behind his cool, sly, unruffled exterior is a vicious cruelty. He delights in torture and inflicting pain. He also likes to entertain, and plays "lounge music" very well.

Note: He speaks slowly, and hisses when he talks.

Special Power - Mind Traitor: Lounge Lizard uses a special combination of the *mind trap* and *hypnotic suggestion* powers to make his enemies betray one another - he can use both powers simultaneously, but sacrifices one action per round to keep up the illusion, and can only use it on one person at a time.

Lounge Lizard uses the *mind trap* power to make the victim see his friends as his greatest enemies. At the same time, he uses *hypnotic suggestion* to tell the victim: "You have a chance to crush your greatest enemy - do so!"

Lounge Lizard first uses *see aura* to determine which foe has the lowest ME, and then targets them with *mind traitor.*

BRAIN DRAIN

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: Phase 1:75, (50 phase 2), (30 phase 3), (10 phase 4)

Robot Body SDC: 900

Age: Has been a mutant brain for two years; a robot for 16 months

Sex: Male

Size Level: 16

Weight: 1000 lbs **Height:** 6 ft, 6 inches

Attributes in order of regression

IQ 27, MA 15, ME 22

IQ 23, MA 12, ME 19

IQ 17, MA 8, ME 16

The physical abilities, other than reaction time and attacks per round, do not change because they are robotic. PS 24; +9 to melee Damage; PP 20; +3 to Strike, Parry, and Dodge; Spd 22, about 15 mph. Other attributes not applicable.

Experience Level: Equal to a 6th level scientist.

Combat Skills: Roughly equivalent to Expert Combat Training

Actions Per Round: 6, (5), (3)

Bonuses: See PS and PP above. Also +2 to Parry and Dodge as a result of robot sensors. And +1 to Strike with long-range weapon systems.

Skills of Note: All Communication, Computer, Electrical, Mechanical, Chemical, and Math skills at 88%.

Weapons:

- **Left Arm:** Built-in Targeting Pod — +1 to Strike with ranged weapons, Built-in Machinegun — 4D6 damage (200 round payload), Built-in Flamethrower — 5D6 damage (10 shots, 60 ft/12 m range, hits everything in 12 ft/4 m area).
- **Right Arm:** Built-in Plasma Ejector — 1D4×10 damage (12 blast payload, 12 hours to recharge; range 1000 ft/305 m)
- **Chest:** Has twin submachine guns but they were damaged and have not been repaired, so they do not presently function.

Armor Rating: 12 (SDC 900 as noted previously)

Psionic Powers: Bio-Manipulation: Paralysis, Mind Block

Personal Profile: Brain Drain is a mutated guinea pig brain with exceptional intelligence. He has built a powerful armored body to house his brain, and uses the built-in weaponry to attack his enemies. His brain section can detach from his robot body and fly away if necessary.

He is also responsible for building the Subliminal Message Generators and teleportation devices for the Ratt Pak. He's an introverted nerd, and will do anything to gain the respect of the rest of the Ratt Pak. He doesn't realize that without him the Ratt Pak is greatly diminished. He obeys Labb Ratt without question and considers the others to be his dearest friends.

Brain Drain's Teleportation Device: The transporter machine is located at the Ratt Pak's lair, but each member of the Pak has a small teleport transceiver, which can instantly teleport them back to their lair with the touch of a button. The hand-held devices are fragile and have an SDC of 10. The big teleporter has an SDC of 250.

Only Brain Drain knows how the devices operate.

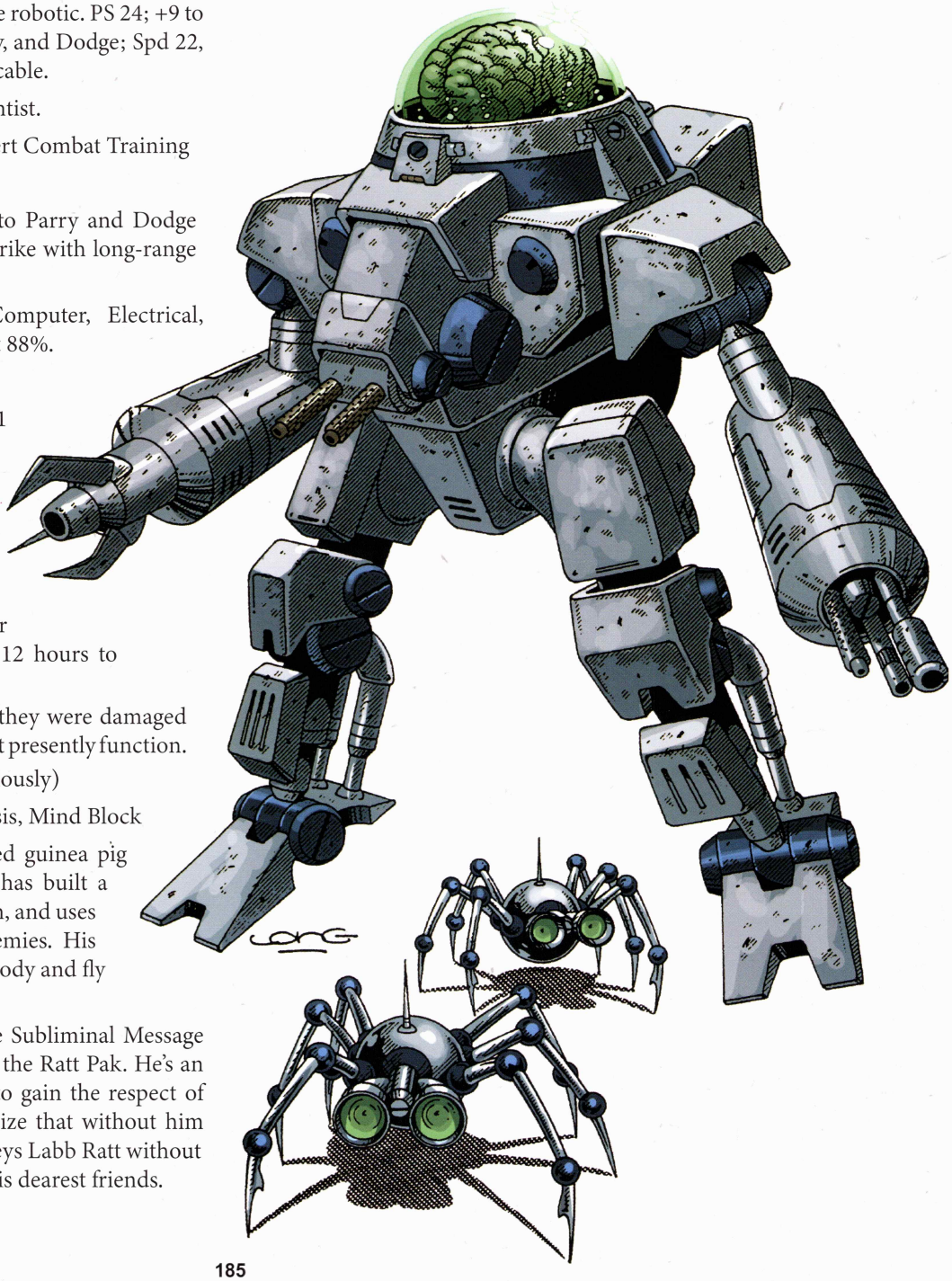
SPIDER ROBOTS

AR: 10 **SDC:** 50 **Speed:** 34 or about 20 mph

Actions Per Round: Two; +1 to Strike, Parry, and Dodge.

Damage: 1D6; not designed for combat.

Notes: Simple programs for assistance, light labor, and security guards. Answer only to Brain Drain.



OTHER CHARACTERS

MONOLITHIC MOVIE STUDIOS

LAMBERT BULLWARK

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 32 **SDC:** 15

Age: 46

Sex: Male

Weight: 195 lbs

Height: 5 ft, 8 inches

Attributes: IQ 13, MA 14, ME 9, PS 8, PP 8, PE 12, PB 8, Spd 6

Experience Level: 6th level con man and business executive.

Combat Abilities: None, two actions per round

Bonuses: None

Weapon Proficiencies: None, but does own a 9mm pistol.

Skills of Note: TV/video, math, computer, and business-related.

Weapons: Usually carries none, but does own a 9mm pistol.

Armor: None

Personal Profile: Bullwark is a pushy, aggressive, intimidating businessman who is used to getting what he wants by throwing his weight around. He has no qualms about destroying careers and lives to gain more money, prestige, and power. In fact, he is obsessed with the acquisition of power and vast wealth. He has built a film empire but craves more. It is this hunger for power that got him involved with the Magaldi Cartel, drug manufacturing, and the Ratt Pak. He sees the Subliminal Message Generator as the means to finally achieve absolute power. These recent delusions of power have made him a little more careless and impetuous than usual.

To clarify Mr. Bullwark's criminal activities: He has been involved with the Magaldi Cartel for almost 20 years. This involvement includes sheltering criminals, laundering money, providing information to the mob, and use of studio equipment and materials for illegal purposes.

He has also enlisted the mob's help when dealing with "difficult" clients (blackmail, theft, illegal surveillance, and physical assaults). It has only been in the last five years that Bullwark has expanded his operations to include the manufacturing and distribution of illegal street drugs.

Bullwark has many influential friends and acquaintances and connections to beat most serious charges. Furthermore, he is ruthless and cunning, meaning that he will do whatever it takes to avoid a long jail sentence. The drug factory on the grounds of Monolithic Studios will be hard to beat. He'll be looking at 20 years (out in 7) for that one. If the SMGs or the Ratt Pak can be tied to him (and Mr. Darkins will do his best to ensure that they are), he will be facing several 20-to-Life terms (out in 30 years... maybe). However, there must be conclusive evidence, as well as witnesses, to nail him to the Pak and the SMG conspiracy.

VINCENT DARKINS

Alignment: Scrupulous

Hit Points: 31 **SDC:** 35

Age: 28

Sex: Male

Weight: 175 lbs

Height: 6 ft

Attributes: IQ 19, MA 19, ME 18, PS 11, PP 13, PE 10, PB 15, Spd 10

Experience level: 8th level movie director

Combat Abilities: none, two actions per round

Bonuses: ME bonus of +2 to save vs psionic attack, 60% ability to evoke trust, IQ bonus of +6% to all skill proficiencies.

Weapon Proficiencies: None

Skills of Note: Artist: Film Director 97%, Artist: Writer 82%, TV/Video 98%, Radio 98%, Basic Electronics 86% Basic Mechanics 86%, Computer Operation 98%, First Aid 96%, Pilot Auto. 98%, Pilot Motorcycle 96%, and Photography 66%.

Weapons: None **Armor:** None

Personal Profile: Darkins is an exceptionally talented director who has made some brilliant action movies. He is known and respected by most of the movie-going public, including the heroes. Anybody who watches television or goes to the movies knows the name Vincent Darkins. He is an honest and compassionate man who cares about people. His films are so excellent because he truly loves what he does and always gives it his best. He is friendly, caring, clever, and resourceful.

MONOLITHIC SECURITY GUARDS

Alignment: Mostly Scrupulous, some Unprincipled or Anarchist.

Average Weight: 180 lbs **Average Height:** 6 ft

Average Hit Points: 19 **Average SDC:** 30

Average Age: 27, but 20% are younger and 20% are over 35.

Average Sex: Male

Typical Attributes: IQ 9, MA 9, ME 9, PS 12, PP 12, PE 12, PB 9, Spd 12

Average Experience Level: 4th level

Average Combat Abilities: Basic Combat Training

Actions Per Round: 3

Bonuses: +1 to melee Strike, Parry, and Dodge; +1 to Roll with impact.

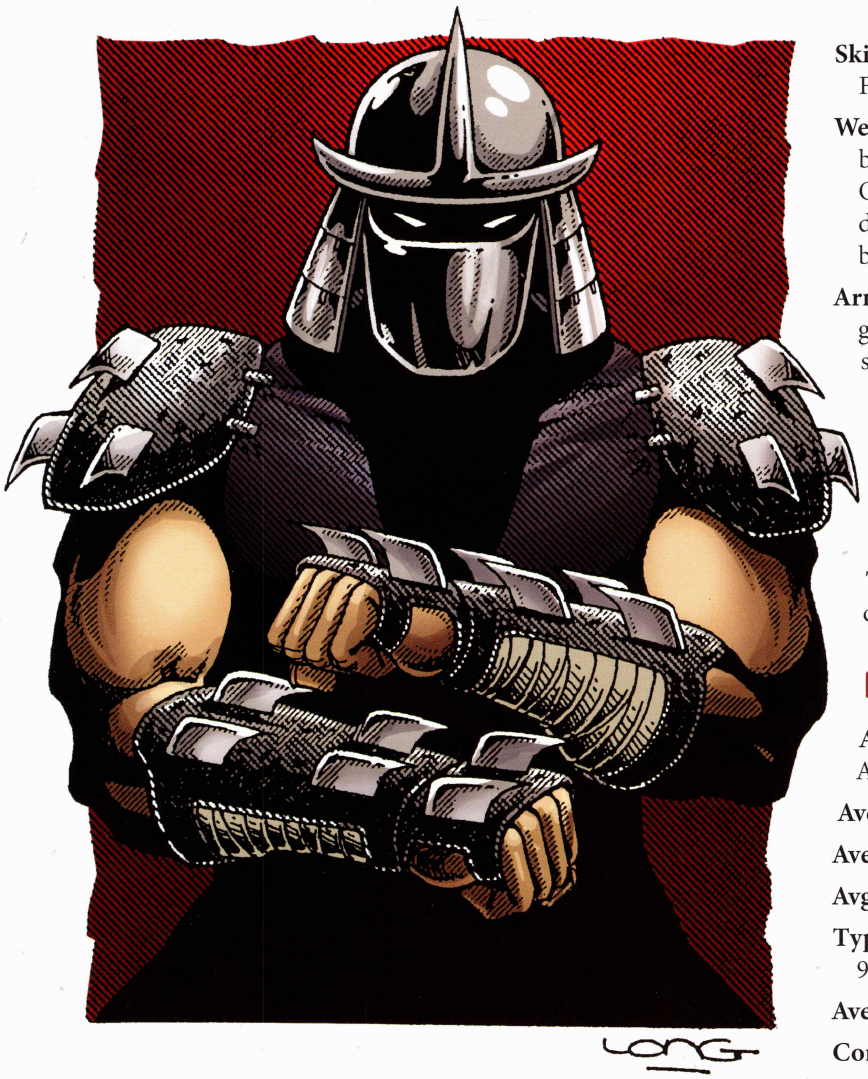
Typical Weapon Proficiencies: WP Handgun, WP Blunt

Weapons: All carry a .38 revolver (2D6) and a nightstick (1D6).

Armor: None

Vehicle: Have access to studio branded SUVs.

Personal Profile: The typical security guard is just a guy in pretty good shape who lucked out in getting a decent paying job at Monolithic Studios. Most are family men. About 25% are ex-police or military. All have rudimentary training in hand-to-hand combat and shooting a pistol. Usually work in pairs.



THE FOOT CLAN

THE SHREDDER

AKA: Oroku Saki

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 44 **SDC:** 35

Age: 34 **Sex:** Male

Weight: 158 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 10 inches

Attributes: IQ 16, MA 20, ME 14, PS 20, PP 24, PE 19, PB 12, Spd 9

Experience Level: 9th level

Combat Training: Ninjutsu

Actions Per Round: 5

Bonuses: +8 to melee Strike, +10 to Parry, +10 to Dodge, +7 to melee Damage, +9 to Roll with Impact, +2 to Initiative.

Other Abilities: Critical Strike *or* Stun with a melee Sneak Attack, Critical Strike on a Natural 18-20. Entangle reaction, Disarm reaction, Hold action, Throw action, Leap Attack.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP All modern weapons, WP All ninja weapons, WP Blade Suit (special), WP Paired (Suit Blades).

Skills of Note: Body Building, Climbing, Acrobatics, Prowl 88%, Fencing, Swimming, and General Athletics.

Weapons: Uses his special body armor with razor sharp blades built into it, 12 shurikens, 12 caltrops, 2 egg shell bombs. Often carries a paired top-quality wakizashi short sword (2D6 damage) and tanto dagger (1D8 damage), and occasionally a bisento polearm (2D8 damage).

Armor: AR 12, SDC 150; The katana-sharp blades on Shredder's gauntlets, fists, shoulders, knees, and shins cause his melee strikes (punches, kicks, tackles, etc.) to deal 2D8 damage.

Vehicle: Whatever he needs.

Personal Profile: A psychotic criminal with a lust for power and revenge, The Shredder is a tenacious opponent; tricky and conniving. He loves to humiliate his foes before he terminates them.

Timeline Note: This adventure takes place before the TMNT destroyed Oroku Saki in the comic book... or *was* he destroyed?

FOOT CLAN NINJAS

Alignment: Mostly Miscreant, some Diabolic, others Anarchist.

Average Hit Points: 38 **Average SDC:** 34

Average Age: 25 **Average Sex:** Male

Avg Weight: 145 lbs **Avg Height:** 5 ft, 8 inches

Typical Attributes: IQ 10, MA 9, ME 11, PS 18, PP 18, PE 19, PB 9, Spd 14

Average Experience Level: 4th level

Combat Training: Ninjutsu

Actions Per Round: 3

Bonuses: +5 to melee Strike, +6 to Parry, +6 to Dodge, +5 to melee Damage, +7 to Roll with Impact, +2 to Initiative.

Other Abilities: Entangle reaction, Throw action, Leap Attack.

Typical Weapon Proficiencies: WP Handgun, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Knife, WP Sword, and two of choice.

Skills of Note: Body Building, Climbing, Acrobatics, Prowl 78%, Swimming, and General Athletics.

Weapons: All carry short sword and dagger, ninja emergency kit (includes 6 shurikens and 12 caltrops), and a weapon of choice:

- Kusarigama (1D10 damage)
- Manrikigusari (1D8 damage)
- Katana Longsword (2D6 damage)
- Nunchaku (1D8 damage)
- Sai (paired, 1D6 damage each)
- Yari Spear (1D10 damage)
- or other Japanese weapon

Armor: None

Vehicle: Have access to a motorcycles, SUVs, and more.

Personal Profile: These are the members of Shredder's army of elite ninja assassins. They obey Shredder's every order without question and are willing to die for their Master. A tough foe. Usually work in small groups, at least pairs or trios.

L·O·N·G

Palladium Books® presents:

TRUCKIN' TURTLES

Written By:
Jape Trostle
Kevin Siembieda

Original Editor: **Alex Marciniszyn**

Cover Painting: **Kevin Long**

Interior Art: **Tom Baxa**

Additional Interior Art: **Jape Trostle**

Original Art Direction & Layout: **Kevin Siembieda**

Original Typography: **Maryann Garner**

Special Thanks To: **Mirage Studios, Jeff, Kev, and Al**

ORIGINAL 1989 DEDICATION

Smiling, Breeent, Dann-y Boy, Matt, Darrell, BBD, Rusty, Monty, Trev, Al, Ba, and everyone else I spent my misspent adolescence with. Let's do it again sometime!

– Jape Trostle

INTRODUCTION

This rough-and-tumble adventure sends the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (or any group of mutant animal heroes) on a zany cross-country road trip from the East Coast to the West Coast of North America. This is the legend of **Truckin' Turtles**.

THE STORY

GO WEST, YOUNG TERRAPIN!

Fans and followers of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* know that while the Turtles' adventures often take them across time and space, they rarely travel beyond the boundaries of New York or Western Massachusetts. For most of their short lives, the Turtles have lived in America, yet they have seen little of the rest of the country. Well, as you might expect, when these guys (or any other mutant hero types) get out of town, they *really* get out of town!

So hold on to your hats, for you are about to begin that time-honored adventure that we all know so well, *the road trip.* A cross-country trek, a quest for America — California, Here We Come — and put the pedal to the metal!

GAME MASTER NOTES

YOUR OWN CHARACTERS GO HOLLYWOOD!

While designed for use with the Ninja Turtles characters, you can easily use this adventure with *any* mutant animal team. Just replace all references to the Turtles with references to the Player Characters. Stay flexible, and your players will love you for it.

Depending on the size and experience level of the character group, you may want to either beef-up or reduce the opponents in certain encounters. Likewise, the string of adventures can be played exactly as presented here or enhanced by adding new scenes and side-plots of your own design to stretch it into a mini-campaign. Bert, Chiquita, and all the other antagonists can be continuing characters and villains who pop up to plague the lives of our heroes from this moment on.

ROAD ATLAS

A cross-country odyssey is much easier to run with the right information. Google Maps and similar services have detailed maps of almost anywhere your characters might choose to go, and Google Street View allows you to see individual streets, buildings, and other locations for a first-person idea of where the action is happening. Keeping a phone or computer with a map display on hand is recommended, especially when players are cruising for long distances at high speed and may cover a lot of ground in a single gaming session.

Of course, an old-fashioned road atlas can also come in handy, and be a great game aid that the players can reference together and track their progress on. After all, just because there is a road, doesn't mean there is a high speed data connection - much of the expansive American highway system is still best navigated with a paper map, and having one on hand for your players can encourage teamwork while avoiding distracting device use.

WESTWARD HO

This trek begins on the East Coast. With the Turtles in mind, we specifically begin in New York City, a.k.a. the Big Apple, the epitome of East Coast living and the debatable epicenter of American culture. If the players are using the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,* or have different characters already situated in the Big Apple, the first encounter can be slipped in as a seemingly simple city encounter. However, any of the East Coast cities such as Boston, Baltimore, Providence, Norfolk, and so on, can just as easily be used as starting points.

If the player characters are from some other part of the world, then you'll have to find some reason to get them to New York. This could be something as simple as a vacation or *a false* tip that a big crime is going to happen there (it doesn't, but the characters are in place for action). Game Masters who are just starting a new series of games will have it easy, because they can start out the action in New York, New York, automatically.

This first encounter will set our road trip into motion.

SETTING THE SCENE

Night has fallen over the city. The heroes can be enjoying a pleasant night on the town or out patrolling the rooftops, seeking out crime and delivering punishment. The neighborhood spreads out before them in a vast crisscrossing grid of intersecting streets and the towering buildings of downtown city blocks. Most streets are probably a little too narrow for the traffic of our modern times. Many streets are one-way, with cars parked on either side. The buildings are closely spaced together and offer a variety of architecture from the last 90 years: from three and four-story brownstone townhouses to 20-story office buildings and apartment houses. The neighborhood is mostly well-lit, and people are milling about outdoors. The time of year makes little difference.

Traversing the streets or rooftops as costumed vigilantes (or maybe their mutant appearance is mistaken for a costume) elicits surprise, confusion, and disbelief from the citizens who may be encountered. Most stop, point, and get out of the way. If the characters are heroes of repute, then one or two of the bolder passersby may try to get an autograph or a handshake. Except for an occasional night owl out walking and some boisterous youths, the city seems pretty quiet tonight.

As our heroes move on to a seedier area, the sounds of shouting and the smell of liquor float by. The neighborhood is now mostly older structures in various conditions of wear. Closed shops and little offices make up the bulk of the buildings, punctuated by an occasional restaurant and bar. They hear the sounds of a commotion coming from a crusty old watering hole a few doors down. The crash of a smashing bottle and shouts of approval indicate the situation is quickly becoming volatile.

The trouble spot is in an alley behind a sleazy little bar and pool joint called *Mickey's Playland.* It was once a nice little place that catered to the working-class people from the neighborhood's warehouses and workshops. Today, it is a hang-out for criminals, thugs, and punks looking for some action. Tonight's action appears to be to shake-down and rough-up some poor good-old-boy trucker who didn't know this ain't his kind of saloon.

1 - ENTER BERT

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS.

You see a dumpy little bar at the end of the block. Bad rock 'n roll and laughter can be heard from inside. A trio of homeless old men curl up next to the stairs. None of the denizens of the bar pay any attention to the ruckus coming from the alley. Near the alley are a dozen souped-up motorcycles. Most are custom-painted with death heads and the words "Skull Cyclists."

From around the corner, in the alley, comes a cacophony of voices and phrases: "Okay, old man, yer gonna pay wit yer life." and "Yer dead meat, boy." "You messin' with some bad dudes." "Cut the old fart, man...whatcha waiting fo..." and similar jeers.

The alley leads back about 30 feet (10 m) to where it opens up into an unmaintained courtyard area. This courtyard is 30×30 feet (10 m) and littered with trash. The surrounding buildings are all locked tight, with sealed windows. An old, rusted fire escape runs the height of the nearest building on the right. To the left is an abandoned building with another narrow alley leading to the cross street.

Peering into the alley, you see about a dozen leather-clad thugs surrounding one white-haired, trucker-type guy with a baseball cap, flannel shirt, and suspenders (he certainly sticks out like a sore thumb among all this leather). The only light comes from a single bare bulb above the door to the back of the bar. It illuminates a scene of violence ready to explode.

The antagonists are a motorcycle gang. Each has long hair tied with a red bandanna and all are dressed in black leather jackets emblazoned with the "Skull Cyclists" logo. They are armed with lengths of pipe, chains, or knives. The leader has a purple mohawk, studded leather gloves, a leather jacket, and is brandishing a length of metal chain.

The old man seems nervous, but not badly shaken. He has positioned himself with his back to the wall, leaving openings for attacks from the front and sides. He says, "Come on, folks, let's walk away from this to fight some other day. I got no beef with you."

"Yeah," snorts the leader, "well, maybe we got a beef with you." "You don't belong here," shouts another. "And you is gonna pay, in money an' in blood!" shouts a third harasser. With this, the others laugh and curse. Somebody throws a bottle that opens a small cut on the trucker's forehead. The trucker positions himself for a fight. His antagonists move in.

What are our heroes doing?

GAME MASTER NOTE

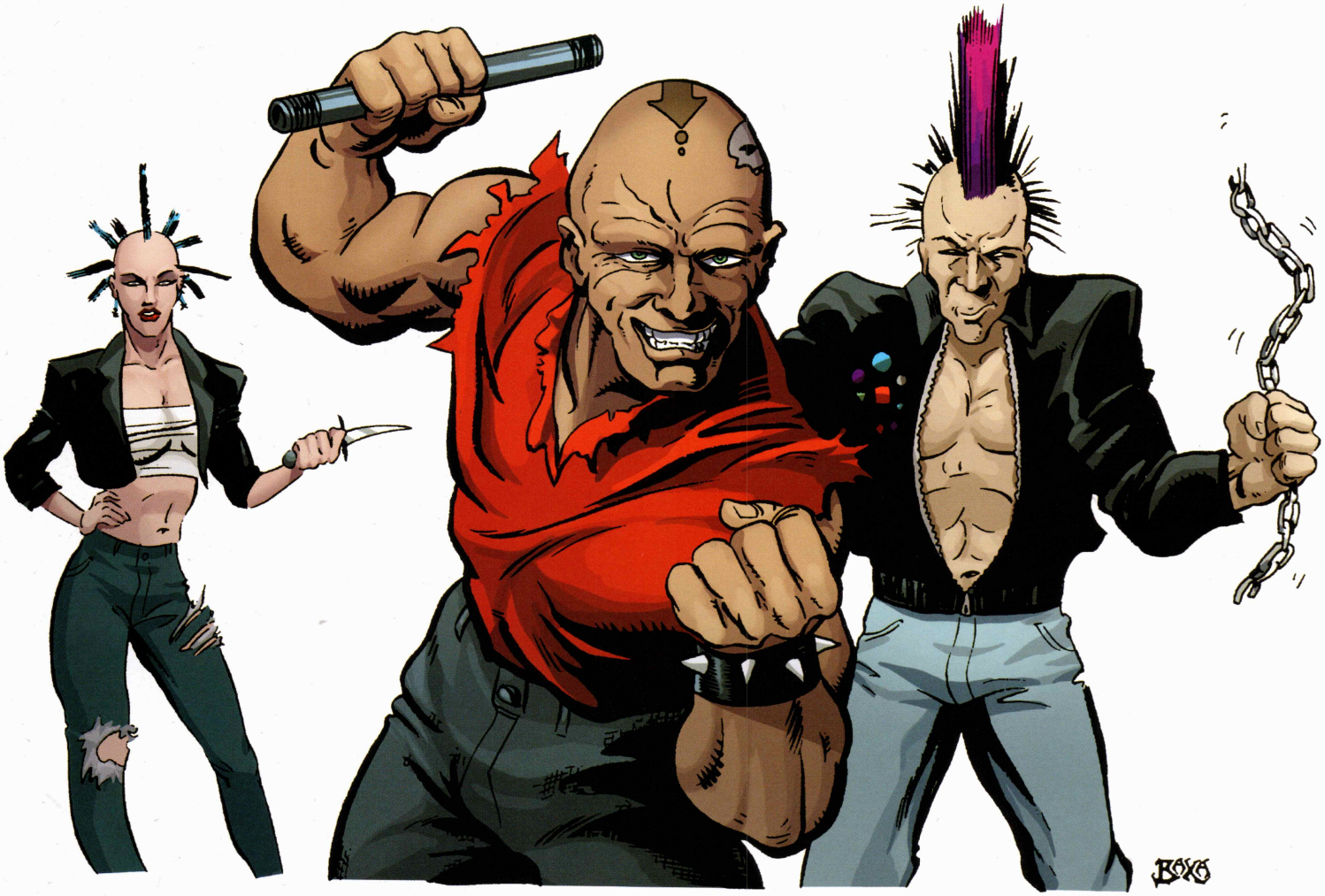
Unless the heroes intercede immediately, there is going to be a serious fight and a lot of gang punks are going to get hurt. The man they are attacking is *Bert McClusky,* ex-CIA and a martial arts expert. However, this isn't the movies, and Bert is facing some dangerous odds, so he'll play for keeps. If nobody arrives to help, Bert attempts to incapacitate (a kick to the groin, a broken wrist, knockout punch) the leader and his first two or three other attackers, and then tries to plow through the rest of them and make a run for it. Even with his skills, Bert is hopelessly outnumbered (note that he does not use killing attacks) and inevitably will fall to the sheer numbers of his attackers without intervention.

If the characters are not involved by the time Bert is getting the tar knocked out of him, then it's time to remind the "heroes" that they are watching an innocent man getting killed. Alignment checks may be in order. Bert is an integral part of this whole storyline - he must be saved and must meet the player characters!

TO THE RESCUE

The old trucker (Bert) stands back to watch the heroes in action, only engaging to prevent a sneak attack against his rescuers.

The biker thugs greet heroes of any kind with catcalls, obscenities, and challenges. These punks are thirsty for blood



and *will* attack. However, they aren't completely stupid and do not fight to the death, nor until the police arrive. As soon as they suffer serious setbacks (like the leader losing all his SDC and half his Hit Points, or more than four of their gang being taken out) they flee. They try to carry beaten comrades and jump on their bikes and ride off. If this is not possible, they split up on foot and make a run for it through the alleys.

BIG BEEF - SKULL CYCLISTS BIKER GANG LEADER

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 34 **SDC:** 40

Age: 28 **Weight:** 210 lbs **Height:** 6 ft

Attributes: IQ 12, PS 18, PP 15, PE 17, all others are average.

Experience Level: Fourth

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Strike, +2 to Parry, +2 to Dodge, +3 to Damage, +2 to Pull Punch, +1 to save vs toxins.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Knife.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Motorcycle, General Athletics.

Weapons: Heavy Metal Chain (1D8 damage), Knife (1D6 damage)

Armor: Studded leather; AR 12, SDC 38

TYPICAL BIKER THUG

Alignment: Anarchist or Miscreant

Hit Points: 26 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 20 **Weight:** 190 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 10 inches

Attributes: PP 14, PE 15, all others are average.

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Two actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Parry, +2 Dodge, +2 to Pull Punch.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Knife.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Motorcycle, General Athletics.

Weapons: Knife (1D6 damage), Metal Pipe (1D8 damage).

Armor: Soft leather; AR 9, SDC 20

AFTERMATH

The police don't arrive until 2D6 minutes after the fight is over (this isn't their fault, nobody reported the fight until it was already). Vigilante heroes, spies, and mutant animals may want to be long gone before the police arrive.

Bert tries to join the heroes or tag along, saying, "Wait, I need your help." This should be sufficient for most player characters to at least hear what he has to say, although conversation should probably take place at a less conspicuous locale.

A CONVERSATION WITH BERT

Once everybody feels safe and secure, the trucker introduces himself as "Bert" and thanks the heroes for their help.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS

> "Yep, I probably could have handled them kids myself, but it sure was nice to have the cavalry arrive. I guess I'm getting old and losing my touch. Walked into that mess like I was blind."

The feisty old boy goes on to explain that he's in trouble and could use the help of "gifted" men and women such as them.

> "So, you see, I can't really tell you much more than I have already. My contract forbids that I reveal the content or origin of my shipment. But I assure you on my honor that it is not illegal or criminal and is, in fact, very important for the welfare of the people of this country!"

Anybody who can tell whether Bert is telling the truth or not will get the feeling that all is true.

> "All I'm asking is that you ride up front with me in my rig (truck). The whole trip will take a week or less, and I'm sure my employer will fly you back at his expense. Plus, I can pay you $1000 bucks each out of my pay. Please. Will you think about it?"

When asked why he thinks that he is in need of their special talents, he'll just say, "There's forces that would like to see me and my load disappear, is all. I told you. I can't say anything else." With this, Bert stretches, shakes hands with his rescuers, and says, with a smile, "I understand. Thanks for your help tonight." And leaves. Before leaving, he'll tell them where he's staying and that he's leaving in two days.

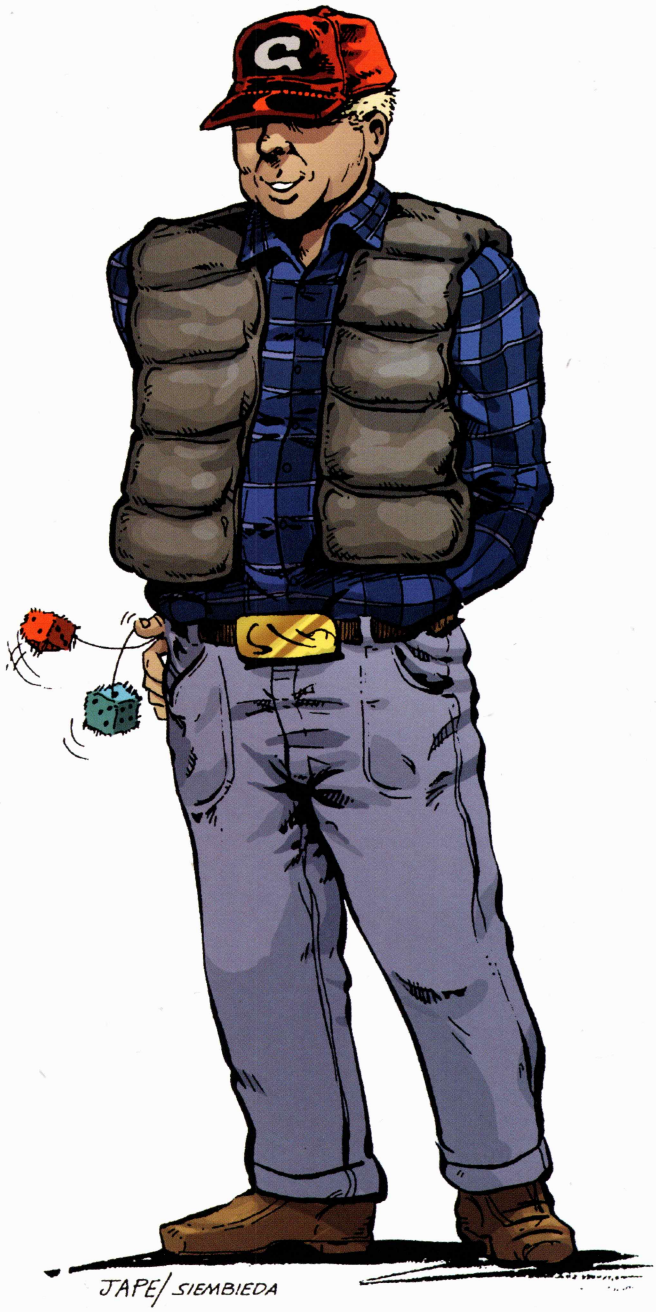
JOINING THE EXPEDITION

WHO IS BERT?

The use of psionics, such as empathy, reveal that Bert is a bit nervous but sincere. Telepathy finds a tough, resistant mind - in fact, the kind of resistance one encounters from individuals trained against mental attacks. However, a few random thoughts and images can be picked out. He's worried about the trip and believes somebody is out to kill him. Images include a big, slick, blue truck, an arsenal list for the trip (including fuzzy dice?), ninja, and a beautiful young woman. The detect aura power reveals Bert to be a basically good guy, in exceptionally good health and physical condition for a man of 50-60 years old. He's human, and a seasoned fighter. Bert is not psionic.

Through research (access to police or military records by means of contacts or computer hacking, etc.), the heroes find out the following: Bert is 56 years old, was born in Columbus, Ohio, never married, was a soldier decorated for bravery in the first Gulf War, and went on to work for the CIA from 1997 until 2017 (there is no unclassified data regarding his CIA years; it is all Top Secret SCI - even contacts with high clearances can't get it). He has been semi-retired since leaving the government, and started a part-time operation as an independent trucker in 2019. His first job was hauling books for a small publisher based in Detroit. He has no criminal record or history of working with vigilantes.

Bert's current employer is an outfit called "IBC Inc.," a leader in computer technology. The assignment seems simple enough: deliver computer components to an IBC branch in Silicon Valley, California.



GETTING THE LEAD OUT

When Bert said his goodbyes, he took the opportunity to attach a tiny electronic tracer onto three of the player characters (for the sake of story progression, he did this without the heroes noticing). He uses these tracers to follow the characters to where they are staying. If they agree to join him on his trip but don't contact him, he comes to them. Bert's appearance on their doorstep should come as a surprise.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Bert is friendly and gracious, but pushes right inside, like an old buddy come to visit. Noticing your attention to privacy and anonymity, he doesn't threaten you saying, "I appreciate the need for cover identities more than you may think."
>
> "By the way, y'all should have tighter security - don't you worry though, I can get you a good setup once we all come back from California."
>
> Mentioning California, his face turns grim. He bats his big brown eyes and tries to look as needy and pitiful as possible. "Fellas, you can see I'm terribly desperate to be following you back to your hide-out. Please come with me on this haul. I assure you, you'll be helping make America safe from the criminals you're always fighting. Please. Don't make me beg."

Bert does not tell the truth about how he tracked the heroes down, saying with a smile, "I ain't without some resources myself." Oh, he'll carefully retrieve his tracers. If the heroes have discovered the bugs and confront Bert about them, he smiles and says, "Golly, will you look at that. I'm telling you, your security is bad! But I can fix that for you, like I said before."

There should be enough intrigue and pleas for assistance from a *good guy* to entice the most stonehearted vigilante to join up for this trip. After all, it is only for a week or so, and everything seems quiet on the home front.

If playing the TMNT, their sensei Master Splinter meditates on the matter and recommends it would be best if his students accepted Bert's offer. Despite the possible dangers, it would at last give the Turtles a chance to go and experience America.

If playing original heroes, their mentor or head of operations delivers a similar message. Adjust the details as necessary to fit the group's personality and relationship with their leader.

THE TRUCK

The group meets Bert at the docks at 5:00 A.M. the next morning. Inside a shabby little warehouse is Bert's pride and joy, his truck, *The Blue Ox*. The cab is one of the conventional snout-nosed variety, is large and roomy inside, comfortably seating three. Attached to the back of the cab is a good sized "sleeper" addition which can comfortably hold another three people of normal human size (four is a tight fit).

Both the cab and the trailer (also called a "reefer") are painted a deep rich blue that glitters in the dim light. Running along the length of the trailer and about the cab are two pitch-black stripes that begin as thin lines in the front and flare out until they are two feet wide at the back of the truck. A vast array of yellow running lights outline the edges of the trailer and the cab. On top of the cab are a variety of horns (the tooting type) mounted in between two high exhaust stacks. A pair of oxen horns (as in the animal) are mounted on the front grill of the truck.

THE CAB

Along the dashboard inside the cab of the "Blue Ox" are the standard dials and controls one would expect to find in a truck, as well as an array of not-so-typical items. There is an old beat-up *citizen's band* (C.B.) radio next to a much fancier *HAM radio* that is apparently one of the kinds that can pick up dozens of channels. A pair of *headphones* are plugged into it, set on top of the dashboard; next to the headphones is a small monitor with a detachable webcam underneath and a control panel on the side. *Three computer monitors* are also in the dashboard, including one with a built-in keyboard. A *satellite radio* system and *mobile wi-fi* completes the dashboard equipment. The only remaining oddity is a useless rearview mirror from which a pair of fuzzy dice dangle. If asked about the mirror, Bert says, "I had it installed so I'd have a place to hang my dice. Why else, 'cept to comb my hair?"

The driver's chair is mounted on what looks like a large tool storage box, but it has no handles or padlock. Instead, it has an unusual-looking electronic lock (characters with a background in electronics or spies recognize it to be a *thumbprint scanner lock;* it is programmed for Bert alone).

THE SLEEPER

A small door opens to the sleeper attached to the cab. Inside, there is a short space in front of a lower bed - it is set up as a double couch complete with seat belts for three people, but can be folded down into a double bed. It also has a large storage space underneath it and two cabinets directly across from it. One cabinet holds a small refrigerator unit, a small microwave oven, and a space for food storage. The opposite cabinet contains a small wash basin with a faucet and a water capacity of 2 gallons. Above the little sink is a 12-inch monitor. Above the lower bed is another, smaller bed that pulls away from the wall to create a bunk bed look (sleeps only one person and is too close to the ceiling to be sat on).

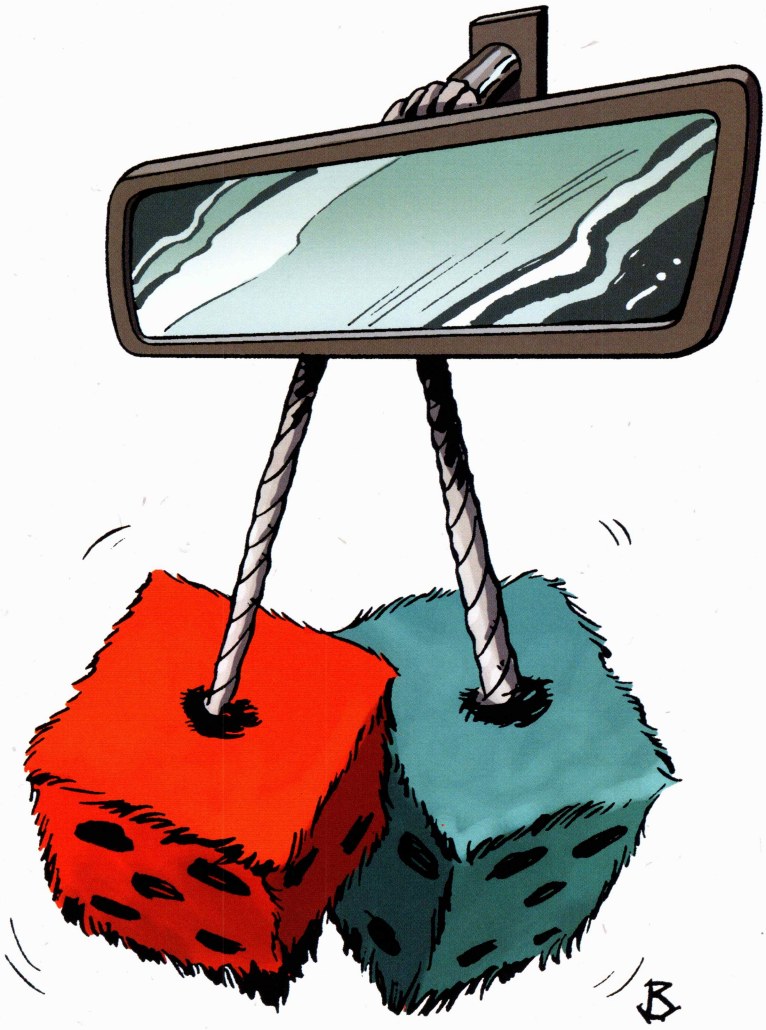
THE "EXTRAS"

For all of Bert's nice embellishments, he has fixed up his truck in some extremely unorthodox ways that are not immediately apparent to the heroes, but important in the story.

1. **Armored:** The windows are bulletproof (220 SDC). The cab has 800 SDC and the trailer has an additional 900 SDC.
2. **Stealth Paint:** The sparkling paint job does more than just make the truck look damn good. The paint is a very special variety, similar to the kind used on stealth aircraft, which diffracts and absorbs certain kinds of electromagnetic signals, making the truck virtually invisible on radar.
3. **Running Dark:** The dark paint also makes the truck almost invisible at night when the lights are off. Bert has a pair of infrared goggles that he uses to see when he's "running dark."
4. **Radar System:** One dash monitor is connected to a *radar system* that can track up to 50 targets. Range is limited to 10 miles and targets must be flying 100 yards/meters high in open country, or twice that among the tall buildings of a city.
5. **Satellite Tracking:** The other computer monitor in the dash links to a satellite providing a multiple map image indicating the Blue Ox's exact location and the roads, terrain, and towns within a 500 mile radius.
6. **Database:** The third computer, with the detachable keyboard, contains data about various criminals and federal agencies,

as well as monitors the truck's condition. It is hooked up to a hidden cellular phone to transmit or receive new data.

7. **Security Cameras:** The dashboard monitor connects to tiny cameras mounted inside and outside the cargo trailer to monitor activity inside the cargo bay, behind, and around it.



8. **The Locked Compartment:** Inside the storage box (SDC 200) under the driver's seat is the following:
   - One AK-47 rifle with 4 ammo magazines
   - One AR-15 rifle with 10 ammo magazines
   - One 9mm Uzi submachine gun with 10 ammo magazines
   - One military issue Colt .45 pistol with 10 ammo magazines
   - Six walkie-talkies, 2-mile range
   - Twelve electronic tracer bugs and a hand-held tracker
   - Six smoke grenades
   - One pound of plastic explosive and 5 detonators
   - One pair of fuzzy dice
   - One first-aid kit
9. **Fuzzy Dice:** The dice hanging from the mirror are actually small, but powerful, grenades. They are activated when the pin tied to the string is pulled up and the center dot of the 3 or 5 is depressed. There is an eight-second delay before detonation. They can be thrown as a pair (1D6×10 damage), or individually (5D6 damage). **Note:** There is another pair of dice under Bert's seat (See #8) and an additional dozen pairs in a small box kept in the cargo bay of the trailer.
10. **Smokescreen:** Lastly, there is a smoke screen device that can release a thick cloud that covers the road behind it. Covers a 40×40×40 foot area. Anybody passing through the cloud loses sight of the truck and has a chance of crashing unless they stop immediately. To determine a crash, the driver(s) must roll under their piloting skill at a penalty of -60%. The cloud dissipates in 1D4+1 minutes. There is enough smoke-generating material for *three* smoke screens.

THE RUNNER CAR

If the Game Master and players wish it, or if there are more than five or six heroes in the group, they may use Bert's runner car. A runner car is a vehicle that drives ahead to scout out the terrain and keep an eye out for "smokey" (the police looking for speeders).

IF USING THE RUNNER CAR, READ THE FOLLOWING:

Bert suggests, "We may want to use a runner on this little trek."

Bert walks over to a canvas-covered vehicle off to the side of the warehouse. "Unless you have a good, solid car of your own, I guess we'll have to use the 'Heap.' It's fast, real fast!"

With this, Bert flings off the canvas cover to reveal a white *Porsche 911 convertible*.

"Pretty nice, eh? I call it the Heap because it cost me a heap o' money. So whose drivin'? So I know whose legs to break if something happens to my Heap."

With a wink and a nod, he tosses the keys to the designated driver. "In the glove compartment you'll find a remote control that'll open the cargo doors on the Blue Ox. The green button will lower a ramp and allow you to ride up it and into the trailer. This ain't a toy. Don't be using it unless necessary! I don't want my Heap or my load busted up. Got it? Good."

GAME MASTER NOTE

Unlike the Blue Ox, the Porsche is a normal Porsche. Of course, that means super acceleration and a speed capability of about 200 mph. Seating is limited to the driver and one passenger, with a small back seat normally suitable only for a child or small pet. The vehicle's SDC is 300. The only extras are a 40-channel C.B. radio (for ease of communicating with the Blue Ox), and an excellent satellite radio with mobile wi-fi.

2 - ON THE ROAD TO PENNSYLVANIA

PICK UP THE LOAD IN PENNSYLVANIA

When Bert has finished checking out the truck, and the characters have stowed their gear and settled into their respective vehicles, they leave the warehouse for the road to California.

As they head out on the open road, Bert lays down a few ground rules.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> "No smoking and clean up your own messes.
>
> If you have to make a stop, announce it loud and clear, I ain't no mind reader.
>
> And, most important of all, I have the last word.
>
> It's my truck."

He explains that their destination is Silicon Valley, just south of San Francisco. They'll be taking 1-70 West most of the way. Only when they get to Utah will they leave the interstate and join up with several other roads needed to get to central California. He hopes to get as far as Ohio on the first day, into Missouri or Kansas on the second, up into the Rockies on the third, down across Utah and Nevada by the fourth, and into California by the fifth day. Of course, road conditions (and any encounters) may add a day or two.

New York City and State can be left fairly easily by taking the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge onto Staten Island, and thereby proceeding to the Garden State, *New Jersey.* While there are still some state forests and farmlands in the south of the state and along the river that borders Pennsylvania, New Jersey definitely earns its status as an entirely urbanized state. Northern Jersey is a virtual extension of the New York City megalopolis. The sprawling suburbs are broken up only by vast expanses of industrial parks and chemical factories.

The fastest way to travel through New Jersey is the New Jersey Turnpike, which takes travelers to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. New Jersey drivers are notorious for driving fast, hard, and close, with lots of honking horns and little use of turn signals (and these are just the old ladies). The highways are somewhat heavily patrolled by both the State Police and local law enforcement. They rarely cut drivers any slack if they catch them doing anything above 70 mph.

Leaving the major roads in New Jersey can introduce the traveler to a vast *maze* of communities, industrial areas, and other difficult-to-navigate roadways. All the streets and roads are marked well, but because there are so many, finding where one wants to go without getting lost can be a true challenge. Thus, Bert stays on the Turnpike all the way to Philly.

There are any number of places to cross over into Pennsylvania from New Jersey using any of the dozens of bridges that stretch over the *Delaware River.* Bert hooks up with the Pennsylvania Turnpike just south of Trenton. While the PA Turnpike is somewhat more narrow, especially through the eastern part of the state where there are few shoulders along the road, it is in a bit better condition than the previous Turnpike. This well-traveled roadway takes our heroes into Ohio.

All the rest stops on the Pennsylvania Turnpike have complete fuel and garage facilities and restaurants, but they are spaced out at rather lengthy intervals, which means travelers have to keep an eye on fuel. Good maintenance facilities can be easily found in and around the major metropolitan areas, such as Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh. They can be found along the exits of the Turnpike and the several interstate highways that crisscross the state. *Carlisle* is reported to have the largest series of truck stop complexes in the country.

For those who prefer the long, scenic approach to travel, there are hundreds of small and secondary roads zigzagging up into the *Appalachian Mountains.* This is not recommended for those who want to get across the *Keystone States* in any reasonable amount of time (add two days if this route is taken). Individuals who enjoy abusing their vehicles can take on the interstate highways that run north/south and east/west. You know, the ones often used by truck manufacturers for vehicle stress tests. The roads are patched, lumpy, broken, potted, and in poor condition at best (maximum speed without risk of damage to the vehicle or loss of control is 45 mph).

Bert and company have an uneventful trip to *Carlisle,* Pennsylvania. While on the road, for this entire trip, Bert is usually friendly, jovial, and talkative, asking the characters questions about their likes and dislikes, food, sports, music, trucks, and hobbies. However, he never asks questions about the group's background, history, or personal lives.

Likewise, Bert offers little information about himself or his past, except for an occasional cryptic comment about having worked for the government years ago. Instead, he offers his opinions about everything from politics to the world of wrestling. If anyone presses him for answers about his past, or his fears about this shipment, the trucker mumbles something about "lots of miles on the road" and become uncharacteristically somber and quiet for at least a half-hour. During this quiet period he ignores all inquiries and comments, including small talk.

GAME MASTER NOTE

See the last section at the end of this adventure for the complete profile on Bert, as well as random tables for road conditions, traffic, and road encounters. Read Bert's writeup to ease role-playing him with the players, and use the random tables to add depth and interesting detail as you feel the need.

THE LOAD: CHOCOLATE CHIPS?

As the group approaches Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Bert announces that they have to pick up their load for this trip at Carlisle. When the Blue Ox leaves the turnpike, it travels several miles past a vast array of truck stops, restaurants, donut shops, gas stations, motels, and other businesses located on the "miracle mile" strip.

Turning off onto a side road, the group approaches a large industrial compound surrounded by a high chain link fence. Outside the fence is a large corporate sign that identifies the compound as being the major distribution center for:

IBC - The Computer People

The heroes recognize the brand's name - it's the largest computer company in the world.

If the runner car was used, Bert instructs its occupants to wait for them back at the last truck stop (the stop is a half mile from the compound).

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Burt pulls his cap down tight, sighs, and says, "I'm not authorized to bring assistants into the compound, so get in the sleeper and sit tight 'til I tell you otherwise. It should only take about forty minutes to load up."

The sleeper may be a tight fit for four or more characters, but manageable for the short while it should take to load up.

> You feel the truck lurch forward, stop, move again, and after a few minutes of jockeying and maneuvering, the Blue Ox rumbles to a stop and sighs.
>
> Bert taps on the wall to get your attention, "I'm gonna fill out the paperwork an get the ol' Blue Ox loaded. You all stay outta sight, and don't get in no trouble, ya hear?"

THE WAREHOUSE

If the group stays put, they're on the road again in 40 minutes.

If the group decides to explore, they may be detained if caught.

Looking out the windows, they'll see that they are in a large outdoor dock area. The Blue Ox is one of several other trucks backed up to a huge warehouse. The end of the truck is inserted into a large wide doorway so that whatever the cargo is, it can be loaded directly from warehouse storage into the truck. In between every few truck bays is a set of steps and a door leading into the warehouse. Above each door is a security camera. Various IBC personnel are moving in and out, while the occasional forklift or yellow Caterpillar, carrying crates marked with the ICB logo, rumble about.

Leaving the Blue Ox unseen is easy. The various trucks and stacks of pallets provide ample cover to sneak off unobserved. All the doors are unlocked, but a buzzer sounds loudly whenever a door is opened and the camera focuses on the door. However, since people come and go all the time, the security people on duty in the monitoring room tend to *ignore* the buzzer during the day. There is only a 1-28% chance (roll percentile dice) that the guards will think the character(s) look suspicious, if they are noticed at all. If the character(s) are noticed, a pair of guards will routinely go to check their ID. If the intruders do not have proper ID they will be stopped and questioned. This will give clever characters a chance to bluff their way out of trouble (but the bluff better be convincing). If the guards suspect the intruder(s) is trouble, they will draw their guns and ask him to accompany them to security to talk to their supervisor. One guard will then call security on his walkie-talkie to report an intruder and to alert the chief guard and backup (1D4 more guards) to meet them in the next few minutes (2D4 minutes). These guards are not too tough and should be easily defeated or escaped from if desired. However, escape will cause a full alert, scrambling of the guards, and add an extra 20 minutes to getting loaded up and out of the compound. If the character(s) run or fight, the compound will be alerted and the guards scrambled to capture the intruder(s). **Note:** Remember that the guards are normal, good people doing their job. They are not super-villains. Heroes confronting them should not use *deadly* force for any reason.

If one or more characters are captured, Bert eventually finds out and comes to the rescue. He enters the security area with a frown, speaks to the chief of security for a couple minutes (out of hearing range), flashes a piece of ID in his wallet, and is led to the incarcerated. The captured are immediately turned over to Bert, and all are escorted to the fully loaded Blue Ox. Bert is silent and stern-faced, muttering, "I see you listen to orders real well. This kind of teamwork will get us all killed."

TYPICAL IBC GUARD

Alignment: Unprincipled or Scrupulous

Hit Points: 20 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 24 **Weight:** 190 lbs **Height:** 6 ft

Attributes: IQ 10, PS 14, all others are average (9).

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Two actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Parry, +2 to Dodge, +2 to Pull Punch.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt (Nightstick), WP Handgun.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Auto. 78%, Pilot: Truck 68%, Body Building.

Weapons: Nightstick (1D6 damage), 9mm Pistol (2D6, 9 rounds).

Armor: None.

Vehicle: Six branded SUVs are available for security use.

THE LOAD

Eight 1200 pound pallets with two large crates each are loaded into the cargo trailer of the Blue Ox, and surprisingly marked:

Sushey's Chocolate
Keep in Cool Place
CAUTION: Do Not Drop

Bert remains silent and steamed about any incident with IBC security. If all went without incident, Bert is his usual friendly self saying, "I got a good feeling about this haul. I think everything is going to be okay."

Instead of driving back to the turnpike, they drive two miles down the road to "Sushey's Chocolate Distribution Center." Bert repeats his request for the heroes to hide in the sleeper ("and this time, stay out of trouble," if there was a problem at IBC).

This time, the loading of the Blue Ox is immediate, as if they were waiting for him to arrive. An additional *six pallets* are loaded, each crated and marked exactly like the previous eight from IBC.

Bert shakes off any inquiries about the crates and cargo with a firm, "Sorry, folks. Need to know basis only. An' you don't need to know. Just help me get it to Silicon Valley in one piece. Of course, if anyone asks, we're hauling chocolate chips."

Five minutes later, our crew is California bound.

3 - THE TROUBLE WITH NINJAS...

As our merry band of heroes go tooling along the countryside, they pick up the *runner car* (if used) and head off to get something to eat at Bert's favorite truck stop across the Susquehanna River.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Bert chortles through a happy mouthful, "Best damn eggs this side of Oklahoma. Remember it's always best to start a trip on a full stomach."

The diner is packed with other trucks, confirming that it is a favorite spot in the heart (or belly) of truckers in the area. The chow is delicious, the service home-town good, and the atmosphere friendly.

Nobody seems to be looking for trouble, and even mutants or aliens can go unnoticed if they try to remain inconspicuous.

Stomachs full and the Blue Ox fueled up, your long haul begins. Bert fumbles around with the radio, trying to pick up a station with "something worth listening to." Several times you hear various DJs mentioning a *parade* that is taking place in Harrisburg this afternoon, and that traffic should avoid the downtown area.

A little while later, the traffic ahead slows down. Looking ahead at the vehicles in front of them, you notice that the vehicles are mostly little mini-cars like the ones used by Shriners. Presumably, they are participants in the Harrisburg parade.

Bert grumbles, "Yeah, cute, but do they have to drive so damn slow in *every* damn lane?" as he switches gears and slows his truck to about 50 mph.

The cars in the center lane pick up speed and Bert switches to that lane. The mini-cars in the two far lanes slow down so that they now ride alongside the Blue Ox. The drivers of the mini-cars are wearing tasseled fezzes and imitation leopard skin vests over black jumpsuits.

"Geeeeez," moans Bert, "these guys are giving Shriners a bad name."

Observant heroes notice that these are *not* Shriners at all, but ninja in outrageous disguises (no need for a Perception skill roll). In fact, the strange combination of costumes makes them uncomfortable, but hesitant to believe that these could be *real* ninja. No, they must be clowns. Right?

At this point, there are six mini-cars driving along *each side* of the Blue Ox. Another four mini-cars are directly in front (two side-by-side in the same lane), headed by a 1965 pink Cadillac convertible. Inside the convertible is a clown driver, a beautiful, black-haired woman, and three other ridiculous ninja in the back seat. The woman turns and waves to the truck, as do the other three in the back seat. She is stunningly gorgeous.

"Dang!" cries Bert, "that's Chiquita!"

CLOWN CAR ATTACK

At that moment, two of the ninja in the convertible pull out odd-looking rifles and fire at the highway sign over the truck. The guns launch grappling hooks and cables, which catch in the large metal poles of the sign and send the two swinging toward the front of the cab. The two ninjas land on the cab's roof, grabbing onto the array of horns.

Bert swerves to either side of the road to hit the mini-cars - they can be easily run off the road by the big truck - but this only causes the occupants to leap onto the Blue Ox. Three cars on either side have already attached grappling hooks and abandoned their cars to climb to the top of the trailer. It's action time!

TO SUMMARIZE THE NINJA ATTACK PLAN:

- **The two ninja on the roof of the cab** are the most immediate problem. They try to open the cab doors or smash out the windows, and then pull the heroes and Bert out. Both ninja are armed with *dart guns* (one shot each) that temporarily paralyze their victim unless a successful saving throw versus toxin is made - the toxin takes effect after one round (15 seconds), and the paralysis lasts 2D4 rounds (not long but ample time to throw someone out of the truck). The ninja are also armed with kusarigama (1D10 damage) and two shurikens (1D4 damage), as portrayed on the cover. *See typical ninja henchmen stats below for details.*
- **The ninja in the four mini-cars in front of the truck** let Bert rear-end them, then leap onto the grill of the truck. Bert's driving skill enables him to send 1D4 of the cars crashing off the road; the survivors successfully grab onto the grill. From

the grill, they throw paint bombs at the windshield to block Bert's view in an attempt to force him to slow down, if not stop completely. Bert slows down to about 40 mph, but continues to navigate via *radar* and *computer assistance*. The ninjas then try to assist their fellows in capturing Bert and his truck. Each ninja must pass a Climbing skill roll to avoid being thrown off the Blue Ox by Bert's expert driving. Falling off of the speeding big rig deals *at least* 5D6 damage just for hitting the pavement - many may fall further off the side of a bridge or cliff, or are hit by other speeding vehicles. Even if they survive, those ninja have no chance of catching back up with the convoy.

- **The three ninja on each side of the truck** (6 total), are still driving mini-cars. Their plan is to grab onto the truck or one of the grappling hook lines and join their comrades in hijacking the Blue Ox as the opportunity avails itself amidst the chaos.
- **The six ninja on the roof of the trailer** have the goal to hijack the Blue Ox and get its cargo. The capture of Bert is secondary, but desired by the ninja's beautiful leader, Chiquita. Each ninja is armed and dangerous; *see typical ninja stats that follow.*
- **The pink Cadillac** speeds ahead to watch the action at a safe distance, some 300 feet (100 m) away. If the villainess, Chiquita, sees that her ninja are losing the battle, she speeds away at an amazing 240 mph. **Note:** She has her escape route carefully planned and easily escapes pursuit. In most cases, she'll be long gone before the group turns their attention to her. *See the GM Section for her complete stats.*

DETAILS FOR THE HEROES

- **The heroes must climb on top of the truck and fight the ninja one on one!** Bert can't shake the ninja off his truck, try as he may. Heroes who can fly or have long range attacks have the advantage here.
- **If the windshield is not covered in paint**, Bert can drive the truck without much difficulty. He locks his door and rolls up the side windows immediately. Remember, the windows on the cab are *bulletproof* so they'll take a lot of damage before breaking (220 SDC). Of course, the ninja have no way of knowing this.
- **The heroes inside the sleeper** can see what's going on by watching the screen hooked up to the surveillance cameras. They can also communicate with Bert and the other passengers in the front of the cab.
- **Bert has four bungy-type cords**, each 12 feet long (4 m), that he uses to secure cargo. He offers them to his protectors so that they can try to hook themselves to the truck's roof. The cords can be easily looped around the horns or exhaust stack. The cords are limited in length and could prove to be as much a hindrance as a help. On the other hand, the cords hold fallen characters four inches above the pavement - much better than becoming road kill. Bert may also tell them about the dice hand grenades if the situation quickly deteriorates.
- **Heroes in the cab and sleeper can exit one at a time** from the cab's passenger door and from the door in the sleeper (on the driver's side). Remember, the sleeper also has a door to the cab section as well.
- **If a runner car is being used**, Bert calls for help on the C.B. radio. They should only be a short ways ahead and can get to the Blue Ox within 2D4 rounds, or less with a successful Pilot: Automobile skill roll. Oddly enough, the runner car did not pass the convoy of ninja-shriners, which means that the villains were hidden, waiting for the big truck to show up.
- **Bert does not exceed 50 mph** to accommodate his friends fighting on the roof of his truck, for fear that he'll send them crashing to the pavement if the ride gets any rougher.
- **If Bert is incapacitated**, one of the heroes must drive or the truck runs off the road and stops. The ninja try to take over the driver's seat and ride the truck to their local, temporary, hide-out only a few miles away. The fight continues on the rooftop.

OPTIONAL - AVOIDING HIGHWAY SIGNS

The more vicious or mischievous Game Masters may wish to add the sporadic obstacle of highway signs to the combat. In all fairness, avoiding the signs should be a problem for the attacking ninja as well as our heroes.

The signs can show up as often as every 4 to 8 rounds (you can roll 2D4) or as often as you like - even just once as the combat heads to a crescendo can be dramatically impactful.

Characters on the roof of the trailer, not the cab, have to worry about slamming into highway signs as the truck passes two or three feet underneath them. Anyone *facing toward the front* of the truck is able to see signs rushing up with ample time to *Dodge* them by ducking underneath the sign (they gain a +4 bonus to the Dodge roll). Those facing the *other direction* (*the rear of the truck*) do not realize the sign is coming until it is almost too late (they Dodge at a penalty of -4).

A failed dodge means the person is hit by a sign at 50 mph. In real life, this would almost certainly result in crippling injury or even death. However, our fictional heroes and villains are larger than life and may be able to survive. **Damage:** 1D6 per 10 mph; in this case, 5D6. Heroes tied to the cord who fail to dodge take damage from the impact, but do not have a chance to fall to the highway below. They can get back onto the roof with a Climbing skill check made at +10% due to the improvised belay.

Characters struck by a sign but *not* tied to a cord are also in danger of being knocked off of the truck and impacting the highway pavement, or even colliding with a speeding vehicle. A hero or ninja *hit by a sign* must check Basic Athletics, Acrobatics, or Gymnastics (whichever is higher) to keep their balance and not fall off the top of the speeding big rig - with a failure they suffer another 5D6 damage impacting the roadway.

THE AFTERMATH

The goons and the ninja all try to escape as soon as it's apparent they've lost this battle. The ninja easily slip away (using the Prowl skill), while the goons run off.

If any of the gun-wielding thugs are captured and interrogated, they know little to reveal. They were hired by some Japanese guy (one of the ninja) to be the muscle at the garage for $1200 dollars each for one day's work. They know nothing about this "Chiquita" character. Captured ninja cannot be made to talk. Even psionic probes extract minimal information, they simply don't know much - all that *may* be uncovered is that they are the loyal servants of international Cuban criminal, Chiquita. They are after the cargo in the truck, something about microchips, and revenge on Bert.

GAME MASTER NOTE

PLOT TWIST - THE BLUE OX IS HIJACKED

Should the ninja steal the truck, **don't let them capture Bert too.** As soon as the heroes catch their breath, Bert informs them that he can track the Blue Ox via his electronic wizardry and a special app on his phone. This indicates that the truck is only a few miles off the highway and slowing down. It stops a mere five miles away. Our heroes can get there by car in five minutes.

The ninja hide-out is an abandoned gas station and garage. The ninja are just beginning to transfer the crates onto their own 18-wheeler; it's black, with a big clown's face and a logo that reads: "N.I.N.J.A., serious toys for people who don't clown around."

There are a dozen ninja assisting in the transfer of goods, two are driving forklifts. Another dozen zoom off in mini-cars to greet any obvious vehicles approaching within a mile. Six more goons stay at the garage, armed with shotguns and Uzi submachine guns.

It takes the villains at least 15 more minutes to unload the Blue Ox and transfer the crates onto their own truck, after the arrival of our heroes. Exactly how to handle combat is up to you and the players; reward creative ideas, solid plans, and good role-playing!

The best storyline is to have our heroes win the fight and continue their journey in the Blue Ox. If the ninja get any of the crates, it will be only the first two pallets. Bert calls off any attempt to pursue their truck, saying, "Hold on. Hold on!" With this, he hits a code into his special pocket tracking device and snorts, 'This'll light a fire under their fannies." Moments later, there is an explosion as the two pallets blow the ninjas' trailer into little pieces. "Those last six pallets are booby-trapped dummies," smiles Bert "You can never take too many precautions. Security is the name of the game. Hey, we better get a move on. I'd prefer to avoid any lengthy explanations with the police." **Note:** Should the police arrive, a wave of Bert's ID and a five minute explanation will send them on their way back to California.

The mysterious woman, Chiquita, and her pink Cadillac are nowhere to be found.

TYPICAL NINJA HENCHMAN

Alignment: Miscreant or Aberrant

Hit Points: 28 **SDC:** 38

Average Age: 26 **Weight:** 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 6 inches

Attributes: IQ 12, PS 17, PP 17, PE 14, Spd 15, others average.

Experience Level: Fourth

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Ninjutsu, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +5 Strike, +5 Parry, +5 Dodge, +2 Damage, +5 Roll.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Sword, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Paired Weapons, WP Targeting (Shuriken); +1 Strike, +1 Parry.

Skills of Note: General Athletics, Acrobatics, Body Building, Advanced Swimming 82%, Prowl 78%, Pilot: Auto 90%.

Weapons: Half the ninja have a Kusarigama (1D10 damage) and 2 Shurikens (1D4 damage). The other half have a ninja short sword (2D6 damage) and a pair of Sai (1D6 damage). **Note:** Feel free to add or adjust weapons as desired.

Armor: None.

Vehicle: Mini-Car with a top speed of 80 mph, 150 SDC, penalty of -10% on driving skill rolls for any special maneuvers.

TYPICAL GOON

Alignment: Anarchist or Miscreant

Hit Points: 20 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 20 **Weight:** 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 11 inches

Attributes: IQ 8, PS 15, PE 12, all others are average.

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Two actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 Parry, +2 Dodge, +2 Roll.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt, WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun, WP Shotgun, WP Rifle.

Skills of Note: Pilot: Auto 78%, Pilot: Truck 68%, Body Building.

Weapons: Double Barrel Shotgun (5D6 damage; two shots) or Uzi (3D6 damage).

Armor: None

Vehicle: A total of four mid-size cars are available.

BERT COUGHS-UP INFORMATION

If the heroes fought well, and especially if somebody was seriously hurt or almost killed, Bert feels it is time to tell them a little about what this is all about.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

"Our load is a tad sensitive, folks. I can't give you all the details; heck, I probably don't know everything myself, but you deserve to know what I've gotten you into. Them crates contain special computer chips. State of the art.

"You guys might have heard of the Friday the 13th computer virus a while back. A virus built into normal software that was programmed to enter a computer system on the bad luck Friday. The virus was designed to completely devour the system it had invaded. Unlike

previous jokes, if you can call this kinda crap a joke, the virus was in *new* software, not shared software or random internet downloads. That means industrial sabotage at the manufacturing and distribution level. Worst of all, it was designed specifically to attack and destroy military and industrial programs. This was sophisticated stuff of top-quality. And it threatened National Security. The top brass was scared spitless.

"We were lucky, word about the computer virus leaked and disaster was avoided, although several smaller contractors with the government had their systems wiped clean. Of course, that was kept out of the news.

"What we have in those chocolate crates is the latest in anti-virus microchip technology. Top secret, government-only, issue. I ain't that computer literate, but my understanding is that they are designed to hunt and destroy invading virus programs, even sleeper programs like that last one, with previously unparalleled success. We're taking them to Silicon Valley for final scrutiny before they're installed in our military hardware.

"My old buddies at the CIA asked me to supervise transportation and babysit this load personally. Since the CIA can't legally work within US borders, they often hire freelancers, like me, to give 'em a hand. Besides, I owe 'em a favor or two.

"Well, anyway, I got word a couple days ago that a spy network 'may' have learned about the chips and my mission. In the CIA, the word 'may' means 'hold onto the seat of your pants and expect trouble.' That's why I thought I'd need some heavy muscle like you guys on this trip. Seems I was right.

"As for this Chiquita dame, she seemed to have come outta nowhere a few years back. She's a big-time operator. Mostly industrial espionage. The Company thinks she's Cuban, maybe Russian-trained. She has her own personal army that is totally loyal and willing to do all kinds of stupid stunts like we just experienced. Shriner-like ninjas. Sheesh, how ridiculous. But effective, I guess. Yeah, she's got a flair for the outrageous. She pulls all kinds of wild stunts. The Steven Spielberg of the spy world, eh?"

That's about all Bert knows. Despite this new openness, he still refuses to talk about his days as a CIA operative, although he'll mention a few Gulf War stories about fighting in Iraq.

OHIO, INDIANA, ILLINOIS
THE ROAD TRIP CONTINUES...

GAME MASTER NOTE

From this point on, we encourage you to use the numerous *random traffic* and *encounter* tables found at the end of this adventure, so spice up the road trip as much or as little as you desire. Use the random tables as listed, expand on some of the ideas presented in them, or use them as inspiration to make up your own encounters. This gives you the opportunity to make this adventure series as lengthy or as short as you'd like. Also, check out the descriptions of *truck stops, greasy spoons*, and *pool halls.*

OHIO DRIVING

As our heroes continue their trek, they ride down from the Appalachians and into *Ohio.* Ohio is a fairly flat state. Its highways and byways crisscross and intersect in a vast web that covers the entire state, connecting the many cities and communities of this great expanse of suburbia. All the highways are in good to excellent condition and provide direct access to Ohio's larger cities.

Drivers tend to drive a bit on the safe and conservative side, which means the roads are not usually the race tracks they are in the east. This is largely because of the diligent work of the Ohio State Police who are infamously tough on speeders, especially *out-of-state* speeders. However, the vast rural areas mean that the speed limit is 65 mph for most of the trip, but careful and alert drivers can get away with 80 or 85 mph (but they better watch out for the highway patrol). Bert and crew are traveling 1-70.

INDIANA DRIVING

The view traveling through *Indiana* is much the same as Ohio, only a little more rural. It is very nice and much of the same. Northern Indiana is as flat, or flatter than Ohio, while the southern portion, which is the route Bert has taken, has hills scattered among many areas of farmland and trees.

The roads are generally in good condition, although service areas on the interstate are usually a fair distance apart. Off the main roads, travelers will find themselves in very rural country where gas stations and people are difficult to find.

ILLINOIS DRIVING

The rural fields and towns of *Illinois* are crisscrossed by the major roads and highways that radiate out from *Chicago.* Finding stops and gas just off the major routes is a snap.

Those heading south of "Chi-town," like our group, on 1-70 as it cuts west directly across the state, are on their way to *St. Louis,* Missouri. The southern part of the state is more heavily forested than the pastoral and rural northern portion, and is nicknamed "Little Egypt" for its supposed resemblance to the ancient Nile river valley.

GRAND OPENING
BURGER
FREEZY
PUSH
cheeseburger
cheeseburger
cheese burg

4 - BURGER HEAVEN (OR FAST FOOD HELL)

This adventure can take place anywhere in Ohio or Indiana, both of which seem to have an inordinate number of *fast food places* at each interstate exit. The time of day should be afternoon or early evening.

While driving along the highway, the group sees a good number of signs announcing the *grand opening* of another "Burger Heaven," a new national fast food franchise. The most ridiculous billboards show the restaurant's mascot, "St. Bernard," an anthropomorphic St. Bernard dog in clown make-up, saying, "Hey Mom and Dad, let Burger Heaven rescue you from boring dinners. The kids will love you for it!"

Bert's tummy is rumbling and the Blue Ox is low on gas, so he pulls off the next exit, fuels up and finds that the only food place at this exit is, you guessed it, *Burger Heaven.* Bert grunts and pulls in, muttering, "Look, I don't know what else is up ahead and I'm starving. How bad can it be?"

The grand opening celebration is in full swing, with a live clown band, balloons for the kiddies, and with colorful banners and decorations draped over the brick-and-glass restaurant. Bert parks the truck next to a row of SUVs and minivans. Two dozen kids seated at picnic tables bounce up and down with glee as *St. Bernard* personally hands out a tiny, free cup of ice cream.

Inside is the serving counter manned by an army of smiling clerks all dressed in white and yellow aprons, as well as wings and a halo. The dining areas run back along big bays of plexiglass windows. The walls are painted in warm, inviting yellows and reds. A canopy of crepe paper, brightly colored banners, and other decorations dangle from the ceiling. The clown band outside is playing a rousing rendition of *Oh When The Saints Go Marching In* (the company's official theme song).

The menu contains such items as *Heavenly Fries,* the *Saintly Super Burger,* the *Heavenly Nuggets*, *Fish Friar Sandwich,* the miraculous *Angel Food Cake,* milkshakes (sinfully rich and delicious), ice cream, and other fast food munchies one would expect to find at such a place.

GAME MASTER NOTE

With all the silly costumes and party events, a ninja turtle or other weird hero will not be recognized as anything unusual. However, that person is likely to be surrounded by a dozen kids asking, "Who are you?" or "Wow, are you a super-hero? Let's see you fly!" or "Hi, mister clown. Can I have a balloon and ice cream?" and so on.

THINGS GET STRANGE

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> While you wait in line to place your "heavenly" food order, the crowd behind you erupts into laughter. Looking at the crowd, you see a Saintly Super Burger spinning in mid-air, in the center of a chorus line of Heavenly Fries, all floating eight feet above the floor. The crowd loves this trick and goes wild with applause!

The burger and fries are joined by a quintet of dancing ice cream cones and some burger boxes. Suddenly, the food goes hurling into the crowd, splatting into the faces of several, not amused, adults. The kids cheer and holler, but the service staff and manager look bewildered.

Saint Bernard steps forward, and in his doggy voice, says that children should not play with their food. The kids spontaneously hurl fries and angel food cake at the poor fellow, and the the six-foot-tall dog is bombarded with all kinds of heavenly food-stuffs flying from every direction. A super burger knocks the Saint Bernard dog mask off and the actor goes running off outside. The adults look concerned and angry. Many of the younger children are upset that the food attacked their big, furry friend. Management has turned pale.

Then food and small objects begin to fly off the tables and from the kitchen, pelting everybody, child, parent, server, Bert, and you alike! A woman shrieks as six knives from the kitchen shoot past, inches from her head, and are impaled in the cardboard cutout of the dog mascot.

The now screaming crowd rushes for every exit. Although many get out, the doors slam closed and an audible "clack" noise announces that the doors are now locked. About two dozen children and a dozen adults are trapped inside. Some have taken cover under tables and in the restrooms, while others stand huddled, whimpering in the corner.

After a few moments of utter, sloppy chaos, the flying food, knives, boxes, and other debris begin to concentrate in a swirling whirlwind directly in front of the doors. Moments later, it stops and forms into a mockery of the human form, a bizarre monstrosity that is simultaneously humorous and terrifying.

The thing's chest is a bag of garbage, its arms are paper cups stuffed with fries and foodstuffs, its legs are burger boxes and milkshakes, and its feet are Saintly Super Burgers. The head is a mass of muck with the Saint Bernard mask for a face, and a spatula, spoons, forks, and other kitchen utensils stick out of the top. Most frightening is its hands. The right hand is composed of four kitchen knives that look like deadly fingers. The left hand is a menacing meat cleaver.

The monster takes a step forward, causing milkshake and special sauce to ooze from its joints. Then it lunges forward, swiping at a startled father, but missing by a good two feet. The atrocity seems unsteady as it walks, but with each step, it seems less awkward and more agile.

"I told 'em this place was haunted," gasps the lone service counter attendant. "When they tore that ol' haunted house down and began to build this burger joint, I said to myself, those people are gonna be in

trouble, 'cause that ghost don't have no place to go but to Burger Heaven. If only I took my own advice. Now we're all gonna die."

Without a doubt, this thing has murderous intent. It is up to our heroes to protect the innocent children and people, or there could be a blood bath - mobile phones aren't getting a signal inside the shop, and by the time panicking people get to a phone and call the police at least 15 minutes will have elapsed, ample time for the fast food fiend to chase down every last person. (And what are the police going to be able to do against this thing?)

THE MESSY SITUATION

- At least a few of our heroes are locked in Burger Heaven with some sort of animated junk monster.
- Heroes outside or in the truck definitely realize that something is amiss when a hundred screaming people run away from the restaurant. They are able to clearly see the creature through the food-splattered windows.
- To gain entry or exit, the doors must be forced (50 SDC to snap the locks) or the plexiglass smashed (200 SDC per door or equivalent area of window). If nothing else, one of Bert's dice grenades could be used, if the heroes know about them.
- Heroes who are psionic, study magic, or into the paranormal: recognize the use of telekinesis, can sense the presence of multiple poltergeists, and realize this *food thing* is some sort of related entity, an energy being that can create a body out of inanimate objects.
- Heroes who can see the ultraviolet spectrum of light see a dim glow around the junk monster. They also see small glowing energy orbs flying around; these are the poltergeists.
- The only way to stop the thing is to completely destroy it!

THE FAST FOOD BURGER BEING

Alignment: Diabolic

Hit Points of the entity itself: 80

SDC of its physical, animated, body: 200

Size Level: 10

Weight: 160 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 11 inches

Attributes: Not Applicable

Experience Level: Not Applicable

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Three actions per round.

Weapons and Attacks:

- Knife hand (2D6 damage)
- Meat-Cleaver hand (1D12 damage)
- Telekinetic Toss - the entity uses telekinesis to hurl small but dangerous objects (all deal 1D4 damage): paring knife, meat fork, fry shovel, milkshake tin, metal napkin holder, plastic tray, etc. Fortunately for everyone, the tables and chairs are mounted to the floor.

Bonuses: +1 Strike, +3 Parry, +1 Dodge, +2 to save vs magic.

Weapon Proficiencies: None

Skills of Note: None

Armor and Resistances: No armor per se; however, the animated body is not alive so kicks, punches, bullets, etc., effectively do no damage other than dent and poke holes in it.

How To Stop It: The only way is to destroy the items that make up its body by means of *fire, energy blasts, magic, chemicals,* or *explosives* - any other type of physical attack only serves to block its attacks or temporarily contain or distract it.

POLTERGEISTS AND A HISTORY OF HAUNTING

The spot where the restaurant stands is the site of an old haunted house, which despite denials from the locals, was indeed haunted. It had been the home to a good number of mischievous poltergeists who had been living there for decades. The supernatural beings stuck around even after the house was torn down and now have a nice, bright, new place to haunt.

Burger Heaven, like the home before it, happens to rest squarely on a *ley line* nexus. A ley line is a sort of invisible pipeline of mystic energy that combines with other ley lines to make up a web of energy that penetrates our entire world. It is along these lines of mystic energy that most supernatural occurrences take place, because many extra-dimensional beings are attracted to and empowered by the energy and can use locations where the lines cross to enter our world.

In the case of poltergeists, they are simple energy beings that often enter into our world through a temporary dimensional gateway and get stuck here, like a bird that flies in an attic window but can not find the window again to get out. They are mischievous, but far from life-threatening.

A total of six poltergeists live in and around Burger Heaven. For them, this *is* a fast food restaurant, because they secretly feed off the psychic energy of humans and other living beings. This does not hurt people in any physical way. The animating entity is a newcomer, attracted to the the concentration of its cousin entities.

To get rid of the entities requires magic or an exorcism. It is impossible for our heroes to do anything about the poltergeists, buy they are mostly just a nuisance. The real *physical* threat is the animating entity - which is *not* slain when its body is destroyed, instead it is only temporarily weakened and cannot take physical form again for a few months. The owners of Burger Heaven will have to hire specialists to get rid of these things.

However, the destruction of the *Fast Food Burger Being* saves the day and temporarily frightens off the poltergeists. Our heroes can continue on their quest.

GAME MASTER NOTE

Weird and mutant characters may be blamed for the incident if they wait for the police to arrive; after all, there is no other tangible explanation. Bert's connections can get anybody out of jail but this time it takes a lot of talking and several phone calls; 2D4 hours are lost while in jail.

5 - GATEWAY ARCH

Things have been fairly normal since the ghosts at Burger Heaven, and the characters ride into *St. Louis,* Missouri. As they pass near the famous *St. Louis Gateway Arch,* they pick up a strange radio transmission.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Voice One: (static) "Devotee One to Kapitan. Urgent."

Voice Two: "Idiot! Maintain radio silence!"

Voice One: "All the guards are taken care of, and we're getting kinda spooked. When is this thing going down, sir?"

Voice Two: "Devotee One, repeat, maintain radio silence. Or else!"

Voice Three: "Hostages secured. But we can't shut them up." (In the background are the sounds of people crying and a woman's voice saying, "Please don't kill us. Please...")

Voice Two: "Maintain silence! I'll be right there."

After a few moments of static comes another transmission, but with a new voice:

Voice Four: "Release the people, son. You can't get away with this. The Arch is ..."

Voice Two: "I ain't your son, pig. Today, the Knights of Whitehall will let our voices be known. The devotees of Zarzitaan rule this day. If you don't release him, this cursed place is gonna crash and burn."

There are no further transmissions. Bert switches to the law enforcement channel and gets a flurry of police code messages regarding the St. Louis Arch.

"Sounds like there's some bad stuff happening at the monument," says Bert, pointing out the window. You can see the Arch, right across the way, and realize you could be there in five minutes. "Sounds like the authorities could use your special talents right about now," continues Bert. "A lot of innocent tourists, too. I've never turned my back on women and kids in need. From what I saw at Burger Heaven back there, neither do you. So what say we go an' pay a visit to the Gateway Arch, eh?"

As our heroes head toward the Arch, Bert accesses his computer and has one of them punch up the available data on the "Knights of Whitehall" but there isn't much:

SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATION

File Number US-6482905-NS1D

The Knights of Whitehall or K.O.W.: Militant followers of Zarzitaan, an occult author and self-proclaimed doomsday prophet arrested for his violent "practices" — the K.O.W. are effectively his cult members.

Average Age of Member: 18

Parent Organization: None known.

Organization Size Rating: S-1D; low budget, low technology, basic facilities, unorganized, estimated membership 75+.

Place of Origin: USA. The first recognized incident involving the Knights of Whitehall was a rally in White Hall, Illinois during Zarzitaan's original court trial.

Point of Operations: Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois.

Leader: Wilson, Karl

Data: Age 31; Male; Caucasian; 6ft 1 inches, 185 lb; place of birth White Hall, IL; a.k.a. Carl Wilson, Kapitan Karl.

Criminal Record: Breaking and entry: 2 counts, assault and battery: 5 counts, assault with a deadly weapon: 1 count, carrying a concealed weapon: 1 count, inciting a riot: 1 count, unlawful protest: 9 counts, resisting arrest: 8 counts. A suspect in three murder cases, but released for insufficient evidence. Served two terms in prison, one for 2 years and another for 5.

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL NATIONAL PARK AND GATEWAY ARCH

This park runs parallel to the fast, brown waters of the Mississippi. The Arch itself is a good stone's throw from the river. It is surrounded by the large flat expanse of the park, which contains a number of walkways leading to and from the Arch and down along the river. There are no buildings near the Arch.

The Arch itself has no discernible doorways or windows, with the exception of several observation windows at the very top. Unknown to the public, there is also one small emergency door, off to the side of the observation room, which leads to the top *outside* of the monument.

The entrance to the Arch is a walkway that curves down into the ground and leads to escalators that transfer visitors to the underground visitors' level. The exit is at the other end. A unique elevator takes visitors to the observation deck at the top.

The only other way in is a maintenance and security entrance located towards the river. The access doors lie flat in the ground on a cement bunker. Opening the metal doors reveals a set of metal stairs leading down to several underground hallways that go under the Arch and join up with the network of rooms open to the public.

ARRIVAL AT THE GATEWAY ARCH

When the characters arrive, the police and security guards are trying to usher people away, telling them that while "there is no cause for alarm, you must vacate the premises immediately."

The authorities decline any formal offers from vigilantes, heroes, or concerned citizens to help assist in this crisis. They, like everyone else, are asked to leave.

Bert, with his impressive ID as a federal agent, may be able to bluff his way into entering the monument; " Make way, make way. Federal agents! Counter-Terrorist Special Forces," shouts Bert in his most commanding voice.

GAME MASTER NOTE

There is a good chance that Bert and his "team" are allowed to enter the monument and are even be placed in charge of operations, but it requires some smooth talking and actions on everybody's part (the heroes need to contribute to the charade).

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Three policemen wrestle with a youth in a torn-up pair of jeans and psychedelic print t-shirt. He is flailing about in arrogant resistance.

He glares at our heroes and shouts, "Zarzitaan has seen the end of days! The K.O.W. know! This place is where the apocalypse begins — it's gonna crash and burn, you suckers!" And is dragged off. These are the same phrases the group heard over the CB radio while riding in the Blue Ox a few minutes earlier.

ADDITIONAL INFO THE HEROES CAN FIND OUT OR OVERHEAR

- Other means of gaining access to the Arch are limited to the *maintenance door* by the river (once in, it is relatively easy to avoid police who are currently concerned with evacuating bystanders), or by *flying* to the top of the Arch and forcing the door open. Another possibility, utilizing flight, would be to smash through the plexiglass observation windows, but this could instigate a mass execution of the hostages.
- There are about a dozen armed terrorists inside the Arch.
- Hostages have been taken. Perhaps as many as 40.
- The elevators and all power have been shut off. The elevators cannot be turned back on for any reason.
- Reaching the top from the base of the Arch requires either flight or climbing winding stairs that weave up alongside the two elevator shafts. It is a long climb, but the only way up from inside the structure.
- The heroes have no idea where the terrorists are located. Presumably, all or most are on the observation deck.
- It's a safe guess that the reference to "crash and burn" means that the terrorists have explosives.
- Bert stays on the ground as backup. It's show time...

IT'S SHOW TIME

The K.O.W. decided they would make their big mark on the world by destroying the St. Louis Arch, a place prophesied by Zarzitaan to be of great mystical power and the "portal to the apocalypse." One of Karl Wilson's many schemes hit pay dirt when he was able to secure several gallons of a metal-eating super acid, banned by the government as being too dangerous and toxic.

The plan was to sneak into the Arch, plant "acid bombs" on strategic support beams, and watch the Gateway Arch come tumbling down, tourists and all. Unfortunately, Karl's goon squad bumbled things and were discovered before they could plant all the bombs and escape. This led to the taking of hostages and the current deadly predicament.

With the authorities refusing to release Zarzitaan, Karl is desperate and a little bit crazy. He is a cold-blooded murderer with delusions of grandeur. This attack is his last bid for "redemption" for failing to keep Zarzitaan from being arrested. He will not allow himself to be captured to do time in prison again and would rather die.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

Climbing up inside the Arch requires the use of the maintenance stairway which places the heroes in the body and skeleton of the Arch. The stairs zigzag back and forth between short landings. To the left of the stairs is the elevator track, a length of iron rails that resemble the track of a roller coaster more than an elevator. Both the tracks and the stairs are mounted to the skeletal network of steel beams and metal supports and struts to which the outer plates of the Arch are attached.

About halfway up, the group hears clinking and whispers. If they are quiet and Prowl, they can sneak up on the three Knights of Whitehall just above them. One is standing on the stairs, nervously watching his two pals as they straddle a couple of crossbeams and fiddle with some kind of package tied to a support beam. All are so intent on their activities that they are not likely to see the group until they are on top of them.

IMPORTANT COMBAT DATA:

- All of the cultists are nervous and young.
- The two on the crossbeams are jittery and afraid of falling. They surrender if the guy on the stairs is defeated. Both carry a revolver and a switchblade. Both are 16 years old.
- The punk on the stairs is a 19-year-old thug and three-time loser. He believes in the cause and fights to the death if necessary. He is armed with a sawed-off shotgun (two shots, each doing 5D6 damage to a five-foot area) and a 9mm Uzi submachine gun (3D6 damage). This guy is vicious! *A Typical K.O.W. Cultist; see stats that follow.*
- If the thug on the stairs is eliminated quickly and quietly, the others aren't alerted to the group's presence. However, any gunfire clearly announces the group's arrival.
- The other two youth easily surrender and spill their guts of information. They tell the heroes about the acid, Karl, the number of hostages, that nine K.O.W. remain, and that the package on the support beam is just one of ten "acid bombs" already in place and set to detonate within 45 minutes. Then, they plead for mercy, relinquish their weapons, and promise to turn themselves over to the authorities.

At this point the group could split up: one portion to free the hostages, the other to collect the acid bombs. The bombs are fairly easy to find, but require 2D4 minutes of Climbing around to find them. Heroes with Advanced Smell can cut that time in half by tracking the distinct odor of the acid with a Perception roll.

THE SECOND ENCOUNTER

If there was gunfire, the leader of the KOW releases most of the hostages and send them stampeding down the stairs. His instructions are simple: "Run for your lives. In two minutes I will begin shooting my machine gun down the stairs." He then sprays bullets into the air to emphasize his point.

The heroes hear a thunderous clamor and a roar of voices as 40 people flee in terror. Panic-stricken, they will *not* stop to answer questions or slow down to exit in a more orderly fashion. Instead, they push through carrying the heroes with them, or pin them, immobilized, against the wall until they have passed. The entire time, they are screaming things like, "Get out of the way... they're going to shoot... run... run... somebody save us... faster... faster... they'll shoot... run... move it..."

It will take about 1D4 minutes for the people to shove by and for the heroes to regain their footing. There is no shooting as it was simply a ruse to give the terrorists time to arrange a proper welcoming for the would-be rescuers. The group then hears a loud clang and the sound of dripping.

The KOW have found a 55-gallon drum of a special lubricant used in elevator ball bearings and have spilled the slop onto the stairs. This makes the last 20 steps slippery, reducing speed to half.

THE THIRD ENCOUNTER

At the top of the stairs is a small landing and a ladder that leads up into the room where the elevator passengers disembark to reach the observation deck. The hatch above the ladder is open. Listening carefully, the sound of an occasional footfall or rustle of clothing can be heard (no Perception check needed). Inside this room is the final set of stairs that lead to the observation room.

Six more cultists wait in this room. *Four* are armed with an Uzi 9mm submachine gun (3D6 damage) and blast anybody who sticks their head through the hatch. The other *two* are armed with 9mm pistols (2D6 damage) and knives (1D6 damage).

Our heroes have to get past them to go any farther. *See the stats that follow for the K.O.W. villains.*

Final Encounter - The Observation Deck

Only *Karl Wilson,* the leader, and two of his henchmen remain. They are all on the observation level at the top of the monument. The remaining hostages are two men, tied and gagged, and a young woman who Karl is holding with a gun pointed at her head.

Karl grunts and grumbles, "Stop right there. Do it! Or she's gone! Just like that." He smiles as people comply. "I will make a deal with you," he continues, "if *anyone* (or two if the group looks particularly puny) can defeat Joseph, here, I'll let the girl go, and surrender. What do you say, hmmm?"

Joseph is a scrawny little guy who may weigh as much as 120 lbs. He is unarmed, wears jeans and a psychedelic t-shirt, and looks to be about 20 years old. He smiles and motions for action. (*GMs, see the stats that follow for a full description of Joseph and his super-powers*).

The other K.O.W. terrorist is holding a glass jar, with a greenish liquid inside, in each hand. Yes, each contains six ounces of the super acid. He hurls them at anybody who attacks him. The acid cause 2D4×10 damage to anything it hits. However, a character may try to *catch* the jar before it breaks open to unleash its deadly

acid. To do this the player must announce that his character will try to catch it and then make a Strike roll to catch the jar, *Strike bonuses do apply*. A successful Strike must be equal to or higher than the cultist's roll to strike when he threw it; i.e.: the KOW has a roll of 12 to hit a particular target with the jar (this could be a person, the floor, etc.), the hero must roll a 12 or higher to catch the jar without it breaking. **A failed roll** means they *missed* the jar and it hits the intended target or target area. Of course, other characters can try to catch the jar if another hero bumbles the attempt. A roll of 1-4 means the jar hits the person trying to catch it and deals full damage to them! *This punk is a Typical K.O.W. Cultist; see stats that follow.*

THE OUTCOME...

The battle with Joseph is just a delaying tactic. Karl's intention is to occupy the heroes long enough to prevent them from finding all the bombs before they detonate. He releases the girl, confident that, if nothing else, he'll still have destroyed the Arch!

If there is a lot of time left after the battle with Joseph, have the heroes search for the ten bombs and let them find the last one in the nick of time. However, if they have forgotten about the bombs or let too much time pass (less than ten minutes till detonation), try the next scenario outcome.

If the characters have already, or simultaneously, deactivated the acid bombs, they have nothing to worry about. If they haven't, then let them sweat. Karl rants, saying things like, "Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha. The Arch will come tumbling down any second now. I am victorious and you shall all die!!" Remember, Karl is a brainwashed fanatic and doesn't care if he dies too.

Let the seconds tick by as people wait for the destruction. Let heroes try to make a mad dash down the stairs or fly out the windows in a desperate effort to save the last three hostages. Whatever the case, the Arch still stands. The bombs do not go off at the expected time. Why?

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> Bert explains, "Well, I kinda figured you all would have your hands full with the terrorists and hostages and all. And I do have some background in demolitions. So... when we found them two K.O.W. kids, and they told us about the bombs, me and the police went bomb hunting. Guess we got 'em all too. Dang! I love a happy ending."
>
> Bert and gang go back to the Blue Ox to continue their journey, the Arch and hostages are safe, and Karl weeps as he's hauled off to jail after all – Zarzitaan will not be pleased with him...

Such is the adventure at America's parklands.

TYPICAL K.O.W. CULTIST

The Knights of Whitehall are mostly composed of young men with a criminal history - low-level punks looking for trouble. K.O.W. is more of a big gang of cultists than a political organization.

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 20 **SDC:** 20

Average Age: 19 **Weight:** 175 lbs **Height:** 6 ft

Attributes: IQ 8, PS 18, PE 14, all others are average.

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Two actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Parry, +2 to Dodge, +3 to Damage.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Knife, WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun (+1 to Strike).

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 83%, Pilot: Truck 68%, General Athletics, and Body Building.

Weapons: Knife (1D6 damage), 9mm pistol (2D6 damage) *or* Uzi submachine gun (3D6 damage).

Armor: None

THE "GIFTED" MUTANT, JOSEPH

Joseph is skilled in the use of his super abilities and uses them with cunning. It should take the playing group a little while to realize exactly what's going on. Joe fights until he is down to about 10 Hit Points, and then surrenders. He is not a fanatic but has joined the K.O.W. for the thrill of it all. He is just a petty criminal with powers he is just learning to utilize. How evil he will become is yet to be seen.

Without a doubt, if captured Joseph *will* eventually escape from the authorities and can be used as a returning villain if so desired.

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 32 **SDC:** 120

Age: 20 **Weight:** 122 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 6 inches

Attributes: IQ 9, PS 13, PE 22, all others are average.

Experience Level: Third

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Parry, +2 Dodge, +4 to save vs poison and magic.

Super Ability - Mimic enables Joseph to imitate the psionic, super, or raw physical powers of another person. Thus, if one of the heroes could turn into flame and shoot fireballs, so could Joseph. If one of the characters had a PS of 30 and 100 SDC and Joe mimics him, then Joe will also have those abilities. However, the mimic power can be used to copy the abilities of only *one* person at a time. The villain can switch from copying one person to another as often as every other round (30 seconds). He can mimic a person as long as that individual is within 25 yards; if they leave that range the mimic loses those powers 2D4 minutes later. Another limitation is that the mimic is *not* able to copy the memory, skills, or bonuses acquired from years of personal experience, just the raw power. This means he cannot mimic the martial arts training of an opponent. Joseph is cunning and mimics the most strongest (PS) and fastest (PP) person in the room if no more powerful psychic, magic, or animal abilities are exhibited by the heroes present.

Super Ability - Extraordinary Physical Endurance gives Joseph his incredible SDC and Hit Points.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Knife, WP Handgun (+1 to Strike).

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 88%, Pilot: Truck 73%, Escape Artist 45%, Pick Locks 50%. Has no formal schooling.

Weapons: 9mm pistol hidden in an ankle holster (2D6 damage).

Armor: None

KARL WILSON, THE LEADER OF K.O.W.

Karl does not take defeat graciously and cannot tolerate the thought of going to jail. However, he is not stupid and does not fight fair against powerful opponents like mutant animals. Instead, he will wait until the moment is right and make a break for it. His martial arts skill and viciousness may catch the authorities off guard (he certainly pretends to be the crushed little villain, complete with tears and whimpers to lull them into a false sense of security, and then strikes like a viper).

Alignment: Diabolic

Hit Points: 39 **SDC:** 30

Age: 31 **Weight:** 200 lbs **Height:** 6 ft 2 inch

Attributes: IQ 14, MA 21, ME 8, PS 18, PE 13, PP 16, PB 7, Spd 15

Experience Level: Fifth

Combat Skills: Martial Arts, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +4 to Strike, +4 to Parry, +4 to Dodge, +3 to Damage.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Knife, WP Chain (nunchaku), WP Handgun, and WP Submachine Gun (+2 to Strike).

Skills of Note: Pilot: Automobile 98%, Pilot: Truck 83%, General Athletics, and Body Building.

Weapons: Uzi (3D6 damage) and nunchaku (1D8 damage).

Armor: None

GAME MASTER NOTE

PLOT OPTIONS – ZARZITAAN'S LEGACY

The various Knights of Whitehall could return later allied with Chiquita, or as a recurring threat if you run a long-term campaign.

Karl is a hate-filled psychopath who lusts for revenge against the heroes who snatched away his greatest moment - he longs to track and kill them. If he escapes he is certain to return. He mentally noted the name and appearance of each hero, including Bert McClusky, the big blue truck, and its license plate number.

Karl and Joseph would both gladly join forces with Chiquita (although she'd be using them as pawns to get what she wants), who is likely to hear about the incident at the Arch and see Bert or our other heroes in the crowd on a TV news report.

Chiquita may even go so far as to spring Karl and Joseph from prison to recruit them and the remaining K.O.W. cultists - don't forget there are about 60 Knights of Whitehall still out there.

Without Chiquita's help it might take them longer to form a plan, but won't they try to rescue their leader, Karl? Note that breaking Karl or Joseph out of low-level state lockups is a very real possibility, but Zarzitaan is being held in a maximum security federal prison (a much tougher nut to crack, though possible).

TO KANSAS & COLORADO
ON THE ROAD AGAIN...

Moving on from St. Louis, Missouri, Bert stays on 1-70 toward *Kansas City*. The landscape becomes rural again, with farms and farm communities the order of the day. As they drive further west, the state seems to become nothing but wide flat stretches of amber waves of grain and attending farms. Even truck stops and gas stations are fewer and farther apart, with towns being far off the beaten path. Kansas is just more of the same.

Eastern Colorado is flat farmland until the *Rocky Mountains* are reached, with the mountains suddenly jutting out of the flat ground with little previous indication in the terrain.

GAME MASTER NOTE

Don't forget to use the *random traffic* and *encounter* tables found at the end of this module to spice up this little road trip. If you want to go ahead and get to the next plot point, the traffic is typical and light for most of this leg of the journey.

6 - CLOSE ENCOUNTER
OF THE SUPER VILLAIN KIND

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

The sun has set and an array of stars, that can't be seen in the glare of the city lights, fills the *Kansas* sky. It's a beautiful sight.

A shooting star whizzes across the heavens and Bert starts to talk about UFOs and his favorite science fiction movies. After a short while, the road ahead glows with an *alien* light.

"Lookit that," snorts Bert. "Don't seem like this trip is going to get any easier, does it?"

Bert instructs the person riding next to him to alert the others in case they're riding into trouble "again."

The light is about five miles down the road. It's not caused by a fire, because there's no smoke, but it does flicker with varying intensity. No towns are noted on the map for this area and there are no accident reports on the CB or police channels. The Blue Ox is the only vehicle on the road as far as the eye can see.

As you approach the light, you can see that the glow is centered on the highway. Bert slows the Blue Ox down to about 20 mph, turns off the truck's headlights, and switches to infrared.

If a runner car is being used, Bert suggests that it turn off its lights, pull over, and wait as back-up while they move ahead in the dark.

At about 400 yards, you can see that the glow is quite contained and seems to be emanating from something in the road.

At 200 yards, Bert whistles the *Twilight Zone* theme then says, "I got a bad feeling about this," and pulls the 18-wheeler onto the shoulder of the road.

"I think it would be best if some of us stayed here with the truck, and some of *you* go to investigate that glow." Despite his whimsical demeanor, Bert looks quite serious. He accesses the box under his seat and pulls out a pair of walkie-talkies and his AR-15 rifle. He hands over one of the radios and checks his gun. "Let's check 'er out, folks."

THE SOURCE OF THE GLOW

Bert insists on at least one other person staying with him and the truck.

READ TO THOSE WHO GO TO INVESTIGATE:

As you approach the light source, you see an odd musclebound hulk of a man standing in the road, radiating energy. The fellow is wearing a strange costume and a gold-colored helmet and neckband. His hands are the size of his head and his flesh appears to be grey. If he's not with a motion picture, and if he's not a mutant, could he be an alien?

The behemoth blasts a cactus on the side of the road and bellows, "Give me the truck known as the Blue Ox and the man named McClusky... or you die!"

This brute cannot be reasoned with and starts blasting at people the moment he gets frustrated or if someone makes a sudden move - which means almost immediately. This is a potentially dangerous battle that ends only when the villain is defeated or the group is incapacitated by him.

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE TRUCK

The giant glowing villain is actually a diversion intended to split the group up and weaken the defenses of the Blue Ox. Whoever was left at the truck finds their hands full fighting off more of Chiquita's *ninja*.

READ TO THOSE WHO STAY BEHIND:

Six ninjas emerge silently from the darkness and attack. They still wear the mock shriner vest and tasseled hat as if to announce who they are. Their goal is to capture Bert and the truck. *See the Typical Ninja Henchman stats that follow.*

If they defeat the truck's defenders, they throw Bert in the passenger side of the front seat and begin to drive off, back the way the group just came. One ninja drives while the others hang on to the outside of the truck.

If the runner car is being used, they see the headlights of the Blue Ox speeding towards them, but they cannot get anybody to respond on the CB. As the truck speeds by, they see the ninja driving and his buddies hanging onto the outside. Our heroes in the car have to decide whether they are going to go after the

truck or zoom toward the glow to see what is happening there. Of course, if the fight is going well with the glowing guy, our heroes can join the fight for the truck or radio to the runner car for help.

As usual, any ninja who might be captured cannot be forced to talk and are difficult to read psionically. Ener-tron, our glowing villain, knows little, is a psychological mess, and has the mind and emotions of a five-year-old child.

GAME MASTERS NOTE
A WORST-CASE SCENARIO...

If the ninja do get the Blue Ox... Bert regains consciousness and tries to fight the driver. Unfortunately, Bert is pulled out of the truck by one of the other ninja and lands in a mound of sand along the highway. He is hurt, but will live, and the group is still together. (The glowing super-baddie leaves defeated heroes where they fall - his job is to fight and win, *not* kill.)

All the heroes have left is the clothes on their backs, a pair of walkie-talkies, Bert's AR-15 rifle, and what money and equipment they may have had on them. If the runner car was used, then they also have a car that seats two. Bert can track the Blue Ox with his pocket tracer, but the range is limited to 10 miles. The truck is barreling away at 90 mph and will soon be *out* of range.

Unless the group can immediately give chase, the Blue Ox is gone from tracer range within ten minutes, lost in the darkness.

The heroes are stranded in the middle of nowhere; the nearest town is 60 miles away. The nearest town where they can *rent* a van, jeep, or car is 90 miles away. By the time they can scrounge up some transportation and bandage up Bert, the ninja and the truck should be long gone.

However, all is not lost...

Chiquita wants Bert badly. Why? Even Bert swears that he has no idea. Consequently, she calls Bert on the walkie-talkie and tells him that she will turn the truck and its cargo over to the group if Bert surrenders himself to her. Bert agrees. Chiquita then gives them instructions to a ghost town in Nevada. "Meet me there in two days, big daddy, and we have a deal. Bring in any of the Federales or the cops and you'll lose everything! I hope I make myself clear. I look forward to meeting you after all this time. Bye-bye, sweetie."

ENER-TRON, THE ENERGY ALIEN

The big glowing guy calls himself "Ener-tron" and implies that he is an alien from another planet, saying things like, "Ever since I have come to *your* world, men have feared me," and "I have spanned the galaxy, do you think that mere humans can stop Ener-tron!?" and so on. Certainly the fellow looks alien, towering over seven feet tall, at 450 pounds, with grey skin, glowing eyes, not quite human features, and crackles with "cosmic" energy. However, he is not an alien, but the tragic result of secret experiments by the Cuban Government to create super beings - *see below if the heroes attempt diplomacy.*

Mutant: The product of deliberate experimentation.

Alignment: Anarchist

Hit Points: 30 **SDC:** 115

Age: Unknown, est. 20 **Weight:** 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 6 inches

Attributes: IQ 5, PS 21, PP 13, PE 22, Spd 8, others average.

Experience Level: Fourth

Appearance: Glowing eyes, exceptionally stocky and broad, stronger than most humans.

Super Power - Energy Absorption: Draining touch allows the character to drain energy from non-living items such as batteries. Impervious to fire, heat, electricity, lasers, and similar types of energy. Can make self glow. Shoot beam of light, does no damage, but can temporarily blind an opponent for 1D4 rounds when shot in the face.

Super Power - Energy Flash: A discharge from his body that hits everybody within a 40-foot area (10 feet per level of experience), inflicting 2D6 damage.

Super Power - Energy Discharge: The ability to send a surge of electricity into a machine often shorting it out. The mutant power also added to Ener-tron's SDC and endurance.

Super Power - Energy Expulsion: Energy which enables the mutant to fire energy blasts from his hands, inflicts 6D6 damage, max. range is 600 feet, +3 to strike.

Super Power - Healing Factor: Adds to PE and SDC and bonuses of +20% to save vs coma/death, and +3 to save vs psionics, magic, and toxins. Plus the character recovers SDC at a rate of 3 per 10 minutes, hit points at one every 15 minutes, with no scarring, bones heal completely 10 times faster, drugs are half

as effective, does not fatigue, and can instantly *regenerate* 2D6 hit point twice per day as a free action.

Combat Skills: Basic Combat Training, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 to Strike, +2 to Parry, +2 to Dodge, +6 to Damage, +2 to pull punch/roll, save vs poison/drugs/toxins +7 (total), magic +7 (total), psionics +3, coma/death +34%. Includes all bonuses.

Weapon Proficiencies: None.

Skills of Note: None, other than combat; can count to 10, can read about equal to a preschool child.

Weapons: None, uses his energy powers or fists.

Armor: None

History: Chiquita was able to *acquire* the giant and has encouraged his delirium that he is a creature from another world. The fantasy that he is an alien being is the only way his tormented mind can cope with his physical deformity and super-human powers. He has absolutely no memory of his life as a normal human. In addition, the experiments that transformed him have also reduced his mind and emotions to that of a five-year-old child. Like most children, Ener-tron tends to accept and trust women more than men and the evil crime lord has used this to her best advantage in manipulating him. Sadly, the giant would die protecting Chiquita, never knowing that she is the furthest thing from a real friend.

Despite Ener-tron's delusions, he himself is not evil and is only a tool being manipulated for evil purposes. If the group can contain him and prove that they are nice, that they like him, and that they want to be his friend (family is better yet), then he can be somewhat controlled and will even want to join the team.

If Ener-tron should join the group, the Game Master should play him like a tough, macho super-hero (or villain) who has the heart, interest span, and mental retention of a five-year-old kid. He tends to be selfish, petty, and mean, especially if he doesn't like you. However, this can be changed by proper example and true friendship coupled with compassion and patience. The only world he can remember is a cruel and hate-filled one; if taught otherwise, he could turn into a real good guy (alignment changed to Unprincipled or maybe even Scrupulous), but this will take quite a while.

Like any kid, Ener-tron gets bored easily and tends to get into trouble because he wanders off or gets mischievously bored. Like a child, he has difficulty understanding complex situations and ideas, can read only the simplest words (equal to about a kindergartner), and gets his feelings hurt by seemingly little things. When Ener-tron gets angry or throws a temper tantrum, he has no idea the kind of power he wields or the amount of damage he can cause.

Note: No matter what the group tells him, Ener-tron will steadfastly believe that Chiquita is good and his friend. It will take something terrible to convince him otherwise, and he will have to witness it himself. In a fight, Ener-tron will be confused by his friends fighting and hurting each other. He will stand by watching, doing nothing, until he can figure out how he should respond. Unfortunately, depending on the circumstance, he is as likely to join Chiquita as he is the player group. If he is mad at them, he is more likely to join Chiquita.

TYPICAL NINJA HENCHMAN

Alignment: Miscreant or Aberrant

Hit Points: 28 **SDC:** 38

Average Age: 26 **Weight:** 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 6 inches

Attributes: IQ 12, PS 17, PP 17, PE 14, Spd 15, others average.

Experience Level: Fourth

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Ninjutsu, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +5 Strike, +5 Parry, +5 Dodge, +2 Damage, +5 Roll.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Sword, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Paired Weapons, WP Targeting (Shuriken); +1 Strike, +1 Parry.

Skills of Note: General Athletics, Acrobatics, Body Building, Advanced Swimming 82%, Prowl 78%, Pilot: Auto 90%.

Weapons: Half the ninja have a Kusarigama (1D10 damage) and 2 Shurikens (1D4 damage). The other half have a ninja short sword (2D6 damage) and a pair of Sai (1D6 damage). **Note:** Feel free to add or adjust weapons as desired.

Armor: None.

GAME MASTER NOTE

THE NINJA'S VEHICLE

A black SUV is located north of the ambush site, about a half mile off the road. *If* the heroes think of tracking where the ninja came from (they had to get here somehow), characters with the Tracking skill or those with heightened senses can locate the vehicle.

The black jeep cannot be seen in the dark unless the heroes make a search and have nightvision optics or similar abilities. The Game Master can also allow them to stumble across clues that it is nearby (like tire tracks), especially in a worst-case scenario (as above).

However, the darkness is a problem so it takes 1D6×10 minutes to track the jeep's location. The jeep can hold six human-size passengers, but the seating is cramped. The keys are in the ignition.

7 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN MUTANTS

Whether the heroes are traveling in the Blue Ox or if they are on their way to Nevada to recover the Blue Ox, they are sidetracked by the events of this adventure.

ENTER THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

As our heroes wind their way high into the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, they are engulfed in a rare, thick fog.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

> The scene is like something out of a horror movie, with a white mist covering everything. It is a very surreal and disorienting occurrence, like driving through a cloud in a car. Visibility is zero - you can barely see more than a foot or two ahead.
>
> Bert has slows the Blue Ox down to a crawl of about 4 mph.

If the runner car is being used, Bert insists that it pull *inside* the trailer of the truck. "I don't need anybody fallin' off the side of a mountain in the Heap."

> Turning off the regular headlights and switching to infrared and computer-enhanced navigation are the only things that keep the truck from having to stop completely. Radar helps too.
>
> Frantic voices suddenly jam the CB channels, none of which are very clear. From somewhere, a scream pours over Channel 19, but is cut off very quickly.
>
> Then another voice breaks the crackle of static, "Oh my God! What is it? I can't see anything... wait, Bob... I... I saw something in the mist to your left... hello, mayday... mayday... wha... Bobby, be careful... stay by the truck... (static)... Uh, break for a radio check. Is anyone receiving this? Over... (static)... Repeat, I cannot copy. Is anyone out there?... (static, then a new, husky voice)... Break 1-9. Watch it, there's a pileup here on...(static)... it's a... (static)..."

Note that any attempt by the heroes to communicate does not work.

> Somewhere in the fog, a forlorn truck horn sounds. It seems to be fairly close, perhaps two miles or less.
>
> The broken voices continue on the CB. "Yow! Something hit my car!... Bobby, are you alright? I'm losing you in the fog... it was probably a deer...slow down. Bob, I've lost your brake lights... What the...

ain't deer, man... help... (static) all over... Bobby... Bobbyeeeeeeeeeeeeee... (static)..."

Abruptly, Bert slams on the brakes and artfully swerves to avoid hitting a car stopped in the middle of the road. He pulls over, turns to you, and says, "Well, (sigh) I guess we should investigate."

Somebody should stay with the truck, if no one else does so, Bert will. The car they just missed hitting is dented and scraped, but the dents aren't the kind you get from hitting another car or rock, more like pounded in with a club. And the scratches look like claw marks.

The fog is lifting ever so slowly so that the heroes can see a couple of yards distance.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

"Hey," Bert calls out, "Why do I feel like I'm in a bad horror movie called 'The Werewolves at the Demolition Derby,' huh?" With this comment, he points out the several cars and trucks that litter the road for about 20 yards ahead.

There are two small trucks, an 18-wheeler, and five automobiles, plus your own truck just behind you. Several of the vehicles ahead still have their headlights on and a couple have their engines running. A few have smashed windows and one had its doors torn right off their hinges. There is no blood and no people. All the vehicles are empty.

Suddenly, the misty silence is broken by a revving engine, screeching tires, and a thunderous crash a short distance ahead.

Large skid marks blacken the road 100 feet ahead and lead off the road, through a guard rail, and over the edge of a cliff! About 200 feet below is a truck lying on its back. The faint sounds of moaning can be heard coming from the cab.

The climb is steep but manageable if careful. Bert has some lengths of cord back at the truck if anybody bothers to get them (if used the cord provides a +10% Climbing check bonus).

The crippled truck is an 18-wheeler, its headlights beaming and windshield wipers wiping. Inside the cab is the driver - a small, fur-covered creature about four feet tall and resembling a giant woodchuck or similar rodent. Its fur is matted with blood and the creature itself has died before the group could reach it. There are no other clues other than the mutant animal.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BERT

While the characters are investigating the wreck, Bert has remained at the Blue Ox. He keeps hearing a rustling noise about 10 or 20 feet into the fog. Finally, his curiosity gets the better of him and he vanishes into the mist to check out the noise.

Bert's last words to any characters with him at the truck are, "Stay here, I'll be right back." Before the other characters can make a move to accompany him, he disappears into the fog. Even if they follow after, they will not be able to see him, even if only a few yards away. There is a brief shout... "Hey! Holy cow!"... the sounds of rustling branches, and... no Bert!

ON THE TRAIL...

The other characters return shortly, with the story of the mutant truck driver. Mutant animals, like the Ninja Turtles, will not be as surprised as most humans would be. The news about Bert's disappearance should add to their frustration. Fortunately, the fog is lifting and one can see up to 5 yards or so. This means the group can attempt to track Bert. Characters with the Tracking skill have an easy time following Bert's trail. If nobody has that skill, they can still follow the trail as Bert has intentionally left a path that a blind man could follow.

At first, there are only Bert's footprints, then some large, odd animal tracks. A layman can tell that there seems to be several sets of these animal tracks, a professional tracker can identify approximately a dozen plus Bert's. It appears that Bert was ambushed and led away by sheer numbers. A few feet away is Bert's wallet. Three yards up the mountain is a big broken branch.

Scrawled in the mud are his initials, "BM" and the word "ewoks." 20 yards up the rocky incline is Bert's baseball cap. Other broken branches and uprooted plants lead another 70 yards, with Bert's handkerchief to confirm that they're on the right path.

MUTANT ANIMALS ATTACK!

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

When you reach the top of this incline, you find yourself staring down a large number of furry little humanoids. The creatures look similar to the one from the truck crash, except these are all very much alive and wielding spears, clubs, and large wrenches. Some wear a pair of binoculars around their necks and a military-style utility belt at the waist. They are roughly a yard tall and look like giant rabbits with short ears.

The gang of mutant animals stares at you, but they make no hostile movements until all have climbed up onto flat ground. Then they start to move forward.

The mutant animals ignore any comments, questions, or other communications the heroes may make.

One says, "Follow me."

Another says, "Book 'em, Dano."

A third starts to recite the police Miranda, "You have the right to remain silent... etc..."

A fourth mutters, "A really big Shoooow, tonight."

If the heroes surrender, they are taken to Bert and the other people locked away in a forgotten government installation built into the mountain.

More likely, if the heroes exhibit any feats of uncanny power or phenomenal fighting skills, the little rodents flee, shouting things like, "Holy moly, Beave, we need some kryptonite" and "To the moon, Alice" and "Amscray... spread out!"

Giving chase causes the 20 mutants to scatter. Capturing one does little good - all anyone can to get out of the creature is a

medley of old and new sayings from television personalities. None of the chatter makes any sense. The three-foot fur ball will make a dash for it at the first opportunity. *See a Typical Pika Mutant for combat data and stats, which follow.*

THE DOOR IN THE CLIFF

The group can follow one of the creatures or Bert's trail to a cleft in a cliff. Inside the cleft is a metal door with three buttons red, yellow, and green. RED sounds an alarm that sounds like an old air-raid siren; the door stays shut. YELLOW opens the door and leaves it open. GREEN opens the door and automatically close it behind the person after they enter.

Inside is a small antechamber with a dirt floor and stone wall. There is a large stone door on the opposite side of the room. The door pulls open to reveal a long hallway. At the entrance of the hallway is a mutant guard sitting on his haunches, nibbling on a Sushey chocolate bar that Bert dropped as part of his trail. He squeals, "Hey dudes, time to go," and runs down the corridor to sound an alert. The heroes must stop him if they don't wish to be overrun by three dozen of these guys.

If the group surrendered, they are led past all this stuff. If they ask where they're being taken, one animal chimes, "To see the wizard, 'cause all of the wonderful things he does."

THE HALLWAY

The long, wide corridor runs deep into the mountain for about 330 yards, slowly angling down into the earth. While the walls and ceiling are carved out of the rock, the floor is poured cement. Every 33 yards there appears to be a retracted steel wall up in the ceiling which could be dropped down and seal-off the tunnel. **Note:** The hall is approximately 7 yards wide and has a 5-yard high ceiling. Suspended from the top of the ceiling are lights. The corridor ends in a 15×15 yard chamber with 10-yard high ceilings. There are five elevator doors directly in front, three of which open to reveal a 100-yard deep shaft to the bottom.

If the mutants escorted the group to this location, they prod them along into one of the two working elevators. Most of their captors enter the elevator as well, but several others shimmy down the cables of the open shafts to wait for them below.

THE MAIN BASE

At the bottom, the elevator opens to another chamber much like the one above it. However, there is another pair of large tunnels, one to the left and one to the right, as well as a half dozen small, crude one yard wide tunnels. The small tunnels look more like a rabbit warren than anything manmade.

The right tunnel leads to several smaller corridors and connecting rooms. A few are set up like army quarters, with bunk beds for eight, table, dresser, mirror, and footlockers. The fur on the rumpled bed sheets confirms that the rooms are not being used by human occupants. **Note:** Clever and observant characters will examine the items in the room more carefully to find that the olive drab blankets and footlockers all have *Property of the US Armed Forces* stenciled on them.

The other rooms are used for storage and contain crates and metal frame shelves. These hold various tools, spare parts, batteries, small generators, Geiger counters, light bulbs, maintenance manuals, and similar items. The crates are each marked: *Operation Deep Retreat* and *Property of the US Armed Forces.* The training manuals are all dated to the mid-1950s.

A stack of yellowed and dusty inventory sheets all have the following heading at the top of the page: *Operation Deep Retreat: Post Nuclear Survival Base and Reclamation Center, ODR-3, August 13, 1957.*

There is nothing of significant value in any of the rooms. If the characters linger in this area for more than 10 minutes, they encounter 2D4 of the little creatures who scamper off to alert the others.

Note: There are two of the small one yard wide tunnels back here. They lead back to the main elevator chamber. A search party of 1D4×10 mutants returns in 2D4 minutes. *See Typical Pika Mutant and the Hunter Pika for stats and details.*

The left corridor leads into 'The Hole," which is the heart of the mutant community. If captured, this is the corridor that the group is escorted down. A fuse box on the wall has the words, *Property of the US Armed Forces* stenciled on it. The four mutant guards, about halfway down the 200-yard long corridor, are wearing old, tattered US Army jackets and belts. "Golllleeee, Sarge, the captain is waiting for you," says one of the beasts in an excellent imitation of TV's Gomer Pyle.

If the group has snuck in and are undiscovered at this point, the guard shouts, "Golllleeee, we've been invaded. What are we gonna do, Sarge? What're we gonna do?" With this, the Sarge leaps into the air, hits a button, and a metal door slams down 10 yards behind the group (SDC 400), sealing the exit. Then he chirps, "It's useless to resist. Follow me."

MUTANT HEADQUARTERS

Whether the group incapacitates the four guards or follows them, they ultimately end up at the end of the corridor which opens into a 10×10 yard chamber. There are 1D6 more mutants who flee through the only metal door in the room.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Beyond the door is a huge, 25×25 yard, command center. On the far wall is a battery of two dozen monitors. Each is playing a different TV show. Nearly two dozen (2D6+12) mutants sit transfixed by the images in front of them. Against the opposite wall, the few lights in that area of the room show a group of prisoners, bound with electrical cords, sitting on the floor; among them, Bert!

To the left of the prisoners is a sort of mock courtroom set up, complete with judge and jury. A grandmotherly type woman is tied and gagged, sitting on a stool. A tall mutant stares at her and shouts, "Confess!" Another mutant cries, "I object! Badgering the witness." The 12 mutant jurors are sitting very attentively, watching this bizarre little charade. The judge leans back and says, "If the defendant has nothing more to say, the people's court finds her guilty as charged." A mutant steps forward and in a husky whisper, states, "Now Dug Loo-Ellen will solicit comments from the defendant." A tall, skinny mutant in a new suit rushes over to the grandma and asks for her opinions. She mumbles something inaudible through her gag, and Dug looks up, smiling, and says, "There you have it. Now on to our next case..." The grandmother is taken away by two tall mutants.

Every few minutes, the scene is repeated.

ENTER THE MUTANTS' LEADER

If our heroes are captured, they are led to the rest of the prisoners and tied with electrical cord. Although it would be very difficult to break the cord, the bonds have not been tied very tightly, and characters can work free of them within 1D6 minutes (or half that time with a successful Escape Artist skill check).

If they enter as intruders, "Court is adjourned" and the dozen or so courtroom mutants flee down one of the tunnels.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

After a few minutes, 30 of the creatures gather around the you, staying a discreet distance away, and begin to hum a musical tune.

The crowd parts, and a six-foot-tall, gray-haired creature walks through. He is the most human-looking of all the mutants, and wears a tattered and soiled grey silk suit. Behind him is a chubby, brown-haired mutant who is continually chuckling and saying, "Good one, Jonny, good one!" Suddenly, the little portly fellow leaps in front of the one in the suit and announces, "Heeeeeeeeeeer-rrrrrrrrrreeeeeeeee's Jonny!"

Here's Jonny, the tall mutant in the suit, smiles, waves, and says, "HOoooooooo!" while pretending to hit an imaginary golf ball.

Here's Jonny then turns to the prisoners and says, with a chuckle, "Well, I'm glad to see I have such a captive audience." His chubby companion laughs uproariously. "But seriously, if you don't think I'm funny, you have the right to remain silent." The crowd of mutants laugh and applaud. "Well, I hope you people didn't wait in line too long today to get in here. Ha, ha..."

Pointing to the bank of televisions, Here's Jonny continues, "As you can see, we really do enjoy humankind's only saving grace: the invention of the television." The mutant crowd lets out Ooooooooo's and Ahhhhhhhh's and applause. "Unfortunately, everything else you've done is a mess." Thunderous applause. "So I'm afraid we're going to have to put you on trial for your crimes. After all, we can't condemn humanity without a trial," and he waves to the jury area.

If anybody asks what crimes he is referring to, he'll go into the following speech, otherwise he'll just go into it.

"You see, humankind is a parasite that feeds on the life of the planet and all her creatures. Ah Ah Ah, don't

give me those looks. And don't try to weasel your way out of this. We see the horrors of man every night, at six and eleven, on the evening news. Oil spills, pipelines, factories, resorts, and condominiums chew up and kill the land. Heck, then you go out and kill each other; gunfights, riots, bombings, plane crashes, drugs, and cigarettes. And I could go on and on and on and on... but the point is, YOU can not! I will see that human life is eliminated from this wholesome planet. Cut out like the cancer it is!"

"You and the rest of these humans are the first to be judged and executed."

Here's Jonny graciously listens to all opposing arguments, but in the end, his views are unchanged. Humanity must be destroyed.

"Ohhhh, you people have been very naughty. Ha, ha, so away we gooooo!"

With those words, a dozen mutants begin to walk over to the humans who have already been judged guilty, with evil grins and clubs in hand. They are chanting, "The time has come to say goodbye to all your living friends..." It is obvious that they are about to beat the people's brains out.

What are our heroes going to do?

DETAILS FOR THE GAME MASTER

1.) If our heroes are too dumbfounded by what's all happening, have Bert bring them around. Bert has worked out of his bonds and is waiting for the right moment to make a move. He shouts, "Stop them! They're going to kill those people!" then leaps up and run tackles, like a football linebacker, knocking five of the little mutants over.

If our heroes join the fray, the mutants direct all of their efforts to stopping them. Fortunately, the footballs of fur are not too tough.

2.) The real adversaries to be fearful of are the four-foot-tall hunter mutants — they are bigger, stronger, and have psionic powers. *See the Hunter Pika stats and description which follows.*

3.) The little guys are puny, lousy fighters, not too smart, and easily frightened. They fight only because the leader of the pack, Here's Jonny, has commanded them to do so. If Here's Jonny is killed they are happy to continue to watch television and remain in peaceful seclusion.

4.) The creatures are mutant *Pikas,* a rabbit-like rodent that lives in this region of the country. They are a product of an industrial accident that happened in the mid-1970s. An unscrupulous waste disposal company illegally dumped chemical waste in a nearby ravine. The particular mixture of chemicals, one summer, had a very unusual effect on the pika that lived in the area. The pika who ate the contaminated grass and roots eventually turned into three-foot-tall mutants. Those who also played in the mud mixed with the chemical waste became the psionic four-footers. One pika who actually fell into a pool of the chemical sludge mutated into the maniacal Here's Jonny; the smartest, largest, and most dangerous of the mutant community.

5.) The underground complex that they now inhabit is a forgotten military fallout bunker built in the 50s during the national paranoia about nuclear war. It was abandoned in September of 1957.

6.) Other odds and ends: Three other manmade tunnels lead to barracks-style living quarters. The four other yard-wide tunnels seen in the elevator room connect to this region at one place or another.

7.) Approximately 60 mutants inhabit this area. Only 10 of them have psionic powers (9 Hunter Pikas plus Here's Jonny).

The battle continues until Here's Jonny is killed or chased away. The little fellows only keep fighting as long as Here's Jonny or the four-foot-tall psionic pika are there to command them. The loss of their leader severely damages morale, and the loss of four or five *Hunter Pika* causes the mutants to flee into the tunnel and hide.

Afterwards, the heroes and normal humans can easily escape by means of the elevator and climb back down to their vehicles on the highway.

By this time the fog has lifted and state police are inspecting the abandoned vehicles. Bert and crew can avoid a long period of questioning by flashing his top security identification card.

TYPICAL MUTANT PIKA

All these little fellows want to do is live in peace, eat, sleep, and watch TV.

Alignment: Anarchist or Unprincipled

Average Hit Points: 20 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 10 **Weight:** 100 lbs **Height:** 3 feet

Attributes: IQ 8, MA 11, ME 9, PS 12, PP 16, PE 13, PB 10, Spd 16

Experience Level: First

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand: Two actions per round.

Bonuses: +1 to Strike, +1 to Parry, +1 to Dodge.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt

Skills of Note: Basic Electronics 45%, Basic Mechanics 44%, Climbing 58%, and their natural ability to dig.

Weapons: Short handmade spears (1D6 damage), big wrenches (1D6 damage), hammers (1D6 damage), wood clubs (1D6 damage), and similar blunt weapons.

Armor: None

TYPICAL HUNTER PIKA (EVIL)

Unlike their smaller kin, the Hunter Pikas are mean and seek the destruction of humankind as much as Here's Jonny. They wear olive drab utility belts and each one carries a pair of broken binoculars or other busted remains of military issue gear.

Alignment: Miscreant

Average Hit Points: 30 **SDC:** 40

Average Age: 10 **Weight:** 120 lbs **Height:** 4 feet

Attributes: IQ 7, MA 11, ME 12, PS 16, PP 16, PE 16, PB 8, Spd 18

Experience Level: Fourth level

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, 4 actions per round; note that all the hunter pika make *fake* "Kung-Fu" movie fighting noises and movie martial arts hand gestures and kicks. Very noisy but actually not bad fighters.

Bonuses: +3 to Strike, +3 to Parry, +3 to Dodge, +1 to Damage, +2 to Roll, +1 to save vs toxins or magic.

Weapon Proficiencies: Blunt, Chain, Knife (+2 Strike, +2 Parry)

Skills of Note: Basic Electronics 60%, Basic Mechanics 56%, Climbing 76%, and Bodybuilding.

Weapons: Handmade nunchaku (1D8 damage), army survival knife (1D6 damage), or metal wrench on a chain (1D8 damage).

Psionic Powers: Telepathic Transmission, Bio-Manipulation: Blind or Pain.

Armor: None

HERE'S JONNY

Here's Jonny has his own twisted view of life and justice by which he lives. He sees human beings as a threat to all other species and believes it is his duty to save the world from these horrible creatures. To do this, he is attempting to exterminate mankind. Fortunately, he doesn't yet have the resources or understanding to commit large-scale genocide. Instead, he will be a mass murderer by capturing and killing any humans who become vulnerable to his pika army. Our heroes have stumbled across his first episode of murder. As of yet, nobody has died.

Here's Jonny is always flippant and joking, but he is also clever and resourceful. If he sees that the humans overpower him and his troops, he will flee down one of the yard-wide tunnels on all fours (same speed as if he were running).

If pursued, he goes to a dead-end corridor and screams, "Better to die free than at the hands of humans," and leaps into a bottomless pit. (A sign tied to a pole that ropes off the area reads: *DANGER: Bottomless Pit.*) Looking into the pit, it sure seems bottomless, and dropping a rock will produce no sound as it plummets 1000s of yards.

However, this is a clever escape planned long ago by the insidiously cunning mutant. About 100 yards down is an almost invisible web of old parachute cord. He lands in this netting and scampers into a small hole in the wall of the pit. This is a small tunnel that leads into a natural cavern where he hides until he thinks the danger has passed. Inside the cavern is enough military canned food, bottled water, blankets, and provisions to last a month.

Alignment: Aberrant

Hit Points: 36 **SDC:** 40

Age: 12 **Weight:** 160 lbs **Height:** 4 feet 10 inches.

Attributes: IQ 16, MA 21, ME 12, PS 16, PP 16, PE 19, PB 13, Spd 19

Experience Level: Fourth level

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, 4 actions per round; note that like the hunter pika, he makes *fake* "Kung-Fu" movie fighting noises and movie martial arts hand gestures and kicks.

Bonuses: +4 to Strike, +4 to Parry, +4 to Dodge, +1 to Damage, +2 to Roll, +2 to save vs toxins or magic.

Weapon Proficiencies: Blunt, Chain (+2 Strike, +2 Parry)

Skills of Note: Basic Electronics 62%, Basic Mechanics 58%, Climbing 78%, TV/video 56%, and Bodybuilding.

Weapons: Miner's pick axe (2D6 damage) and a .45 automatic pistol with 7 rounds remaining (4D6 damage).

Psionic Powers: Mental Speech and Hypnotic Suggestion.

Armor: None

YES MAN

Here's Jonny's sidekick "Yes Man" is just a roly-poly **Typical Mutant Pika** — he is neither evil nor conniving, just an opportunist and pal of Here's Jonny caught up in his bizarre paranoia like the rest of the mutants.

ON THE ROAD TO UTAH AND NEVADA

Utah is a harsh-looking place; much of the terrain is dominated by the Rocky Mountains, desert, and salt flats. Still, it is beautiful with its colorful canyons and national forests and is impressive in its vastness.

I-70 takes our travelers over several sharp mountain passes, into forested valleys, and across the flatlands, but then curves southward toward Arizona and Southern California. The gang must take a two-lane highway, I-15, to continue west, weaving through desert, canyons, and salt flats.

Getting across Utah is a picnic compared to *Nevada,* because of its flat, searing desert valleys and grueling mountain ranges. Most service stations and civilization are concentrated around little towns found along the highway about every 50 to 80 miles. There is little else, other than dust and cactus in between.

Some small secondary and dirt roads connect to the highway, but the state is sparsely populated and does not have as many roads as the eastern states.

The northern portion of Nevada is composed of deserts, flatlands, and wildlife preserves.

Toward the south is the glitter of *Las Vegas,* Lake Mead, the Hoover Dam, military test ranges, military bases, and more desert and flat land. It is hot, hot, hot.

GAME MASTER NOTE

You may wish to throw in a few random encounters along the way, which is fine if our heroes still have possession of the Blue Ox and its special cargo.

However, if they are on their way to meet Chiquita, the journey is free of further attack.

This is the last chance to wrap up any plot threads or subplots that may have resulted from role-playing encounters or unique character actions or heroic backgrounds.

Either way, let the group rest up, heal, and rearm because a big ol fight is about to kick off.

THE FINAL BATTLE AT THE O.K. CORRAL

This is it, the big showdown.

If our intrepid group is on their way to meet Chiquita at the ghost town, jump ahead to their arrival in town. Nothing is going to happen until they arrive and try to trade Bert for the Blue Ox and its cargo of virus-proof computer chips. Bert is open to any ideas to trick Chiquita, recover the truck and goods, and save his butt too. Give players ample time to formulate their characters' plans to save Bert.

If the heroes have fought off all attacks successfully and still have the truck, Bert, and cargo, then...

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

A few miles down a lonely stretch of highway, you come upon a construction site near an exit. A flagman stops the truck and explains that a construction accident has temporarily closed the highway. It will take at least six hours before the lanes are cleared, so they have arranged a small detour around the trouble spot. He assures everybody that "the detour will take you less than 25 miles out of your way and have you back on track before you know it."

Two other trucks have already turned onto the detour strip and have disappeared from sight. "Heck," grumbles Bert, "it's better than sitting out here in the heat for half the day." He gives his cap a tug and turns onto the detour.

The road is narrow and the shoulders on either side are unfinished and soft, meaning that the truck can not be turned around without the threat of getting stuck. Bert begins to get a little nervous and asks the you to stay alert.

As the road winds among some low-lying hills heading northwest, you notice that there are no vehicles behind you.

Nor are there any ahead of you. As far as the eye can see, there are only wide open spaces and a few hills.

"I think we've been hoodwinked, folks," moans Bert. "As soon as I can, I'll turn the rig around. But something tells me we ain't gonna get the opportunity."

A few moments later, the sound of an approaching helicopter rumbles over the noise of the engine. A black assault helicopter rises from its hiding place behind a nearby hill.

"Looks like a Huey 1-D with an XM-3 rocket launcher and thumper in its nose!" describes Bert with a sigh.

A voice with a Cuban accent booms over a loudspeaker, "Youse in da truck, youse will turn at da next road where dare is a signpost for da Capital Movie

Studio. Youse will take dis road until you reach a leettle town. An' remember, we fly above youse and watch. Now go."

Bert continues driving, listening to any suggestions, then adds:

"Yeah, we could probably take that baby out, but maybe it's time to go to their party and put an end to all the dancin' they've been having us do. You all up for it?" ...a pause for answers... "Hell, then let's party!"

The Blue Ox barrels down the dirt road, doing 50 mph. In the next few minutes, it would be wise for our heroes to formulate a basic plan. Bert points out the following:

- The villains want the cargo in the trailer, so they aren't *likely* to actually use rockets or grenade launchers on them until they're out of the truck. The 'copter is just Chiquita's flair for theatrics.
- On the other hand, Chiquita is known to be unpredictable and a little crazy, so don't take dumb chances.
- The place is probably crawling with goons and ninja.
- Unless *Ener-tron* was defeated and turned over to the authorities, he will likely be skulking around somewhere too. If he turned good, he might be a valuable ally for a group of less combat savvy heroes.
- If Chiquita shows herself, you can bet she's playing this round for keeps.

THE GHOST TOWN

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

A tiny little town of two dozen buildings can be seen a mile or two ahead. A sign warns:

```
Property of Capital Movie Studios
NO Trespassing
Authorized Personnel ONLY
```

Bert comments, "Capital Movies used to make a lot of Westerns back in the 60s and 70s, but went out of business years ago."

Sure enough, as you pull up to the town, it is obvious that it is an old west town built for the movies. Old wooden buildings line a single dirt street running through what's supposed to be the center of town. Off behind main street are a couple of warehouses disguised as barns. There is the Silver Dollar Saloon, Miss Kitty's boarding house, the barbershop, general store, sheriff's office, a house or two, and, at the end of town, the O.K. Corral.

Every building and post has the same wanted poster nailed to it, perhaps a hundred in all.

```
WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE
Melvin (Bert) McClusky
For crimes against his daughter
and her mother
```

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Bert's face turns pale and his eyes narrow in anger and astonishment. "What the Hell is going on here?" he mutters as he tears down one of the posters and crumples it. "What's going on here?!" he bellows, turning to gaze down the street.

"Alright! We're waiting! What's your game?" Only Bert is answered by a gust of wind and a rolling tumbleweed. Silence prevails.

Bert turns to address the heroes who have grown to become friends. For the first time, he suddenly looks old and hurting.

"You know I worked for the government. CIA. The Company. It ain't quite what the spy movies make it out to be, but there were moments...

"Well, anyway, I was in Havana, Cuba, back in the last few years that really meant something. I was undercover deep. So deep that I even took myself a Cuban woman for a wife. She was a beauty. Figured if I was gonna play the game, might as well play it good. I didn't love her, of course. Not at first anyway. Just a marriage of convenience. Yeah, I was a pro."

Bert pauses and wipes a tear from his eye before continuing. "She was really something, my wife. I never loved anybody or anything more than her, 'cept maybe my country. We had it damn good too. I kept a low profile and kept intelligence flowing into the States. All the while I lived happily with my woman. She didn't know anything about my work as a spy against the Castro government.

"One day I had a message from back home. Somebody back at headquarters had gotten sloppy,

and my cover was blown. I had gone too deep, felt more at home over there than I did here.

"I... I guess I got careless. I should've seen it coming. I should've gotten my sweetheart out of the country before it all went sour.

"I wasn't the only agent who was compromised. The Cubans turned the whole government upside down looking for moles. I was a priority, though. The Company pulled me out right then and there. No goodbyes, no last words, nothing. One minute I was there, the next ... gone.

"They promised me they'd get her out, but Castro slapped a lid on Cuba and closed her up tighter than a drum.

"Word finally came out, a few years later, that my wife was picked up for interrogation 'bout my activities. I... can only... pray that they... weren't too severe on her. Then... word was that she had died in... prison." Bert's lips tremble and he turns away to hide his tears.

"I didn't mean for any of it to happen like that..." Again, he pauses. "Anyway, that was a long time ago. A lifetime ago. Never found anybody like her again. But now, this."

Bert trembles with sorrow as he uncrumples the poster and reads: "For crimes against his... daughter... My darling thought she was pregnant. She was going to see the doctor the day I got yanked. I always assumed... the... the baby died... or... that there never was a baby. I guess that was the easy answer. No baby. But what if she was pregnant? What if the baby lived? What if it was a little girl? A baby who had to grow up alone. Her mother dead... her daddy a traitor to her country. A baby who, maybe, grew up to be a spy like her old man. A woman who grew up hating her father for... what he had done."

Bert takes a deep breath and gasps, "I think Chiquita is my daughter. That would explain why she's out to get me. That's the only answer, isn't it?"

McClusky looks like a zombie. After years of fighting, he is finally teetering at the breaking point. He only half hears any arguments that this could all be a setup, that it is all a plot to break him. That this is the kind of deception and drama that the villainess, Chiquita, is famous for. The motive could be revenge for leaving her behind. Chiquita would certainly have access to that information. Or perhaps it is simply a desire to get rid of an excellent agent who has made countless enemies over the decades. There are a lot of alternative possibilities, but Bert is lost to despair and hears none of it.

Chiquita has successfully reduced her opposition by one. Bert staggers against a doorway and slumps to the floor. The fight is gone from him. At least he is safe. The battle is up to the heroes.

THE NINJA COWBOY BATTLE BEGINS

Three ninja step out of the saloon. One is still wearing vests and tasseled fez, the other two are wearing cowboy hats, western vests, and cowboy boots with spurs. The ninja cowboys are twirling a pair of nunchaku in each hand (1D8 damage each). The one wearing the fez is carrying a *bisento,* a two-handed spear (2D6 damage). They wave and beckon three of our heroes to engage them in a one-on-one showdown.

GAME MASTER NOTE

The three Ninja Cowboys are basically the same as the *Typical Ninja Henchmen* with these differences: Add 10 points to their SDC, WP Paired, and add another +2 to Strike and +2 to Parry when using the weapons they now hold.

In all fairness, the heroes who accept the showdown with the ninja should use similar weapons, martial arts, or similar fighting techniques. Surprisingly, the fight will be fair, without outside interference.

If the heroes win, Chiquita's voice booms over a hidden loudspeaker that seems to be at the O.K. Corral.

"Oh, very smartly done." she chimes. "Daddy always did work with the best. Most entertaining. Now let's see how you fare against these fellows."

Note: Characters who came here to recover the Blue Ox and cargo may shout questions about the trading of Bert for the cargo. Chiquita giggles and says, "Oh, I changed my mind."

THE ROTTEN SHERIFF

A moment later, a sheriff emerges from the town jail. He is in full traditional old west regalia, badge glistening in the sun. Both "six-shooters" have been drawn and are pointed at the group who just fought the ninja.

"You lot shouldn't a done what ya did. Now I gotta take ya in."

Any movement, even scratching one's nose, sets the sheriff shooting. "Ya done it now!" he shouts, and keeps trudging forward, shooting far more bullets than his guns should really hold.

He shrugs off any punches, bullets, or energy blasts the characters may retaliate with, although he is clearly taking damage. However, the sheriff keeps coming and shooting, saying, "Only a scratch. Now yer gonna pay... (click)... Only a scratch. Now yer gonna pay... (click)... Only a scratch. Now yer gonna pay..."

THE ROBOT SHERIFF

Note: The sheriff is a robot with a simple program: shoot and kill all desperados who are not dressed in ninja outfits. He will keep attacking until he is destroyed.

Alignment: Diabolic

Armor Rating: 14 **SDC:** 400

Weight: 1000 lbs **Height:** 6 ft 4 inches

Attributes: Not applicable; a simple machine with a basic computer brain. PS 20, PP 10, Speed 8.

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Combat Skills: Ninjutsu, *Six* actions per round!

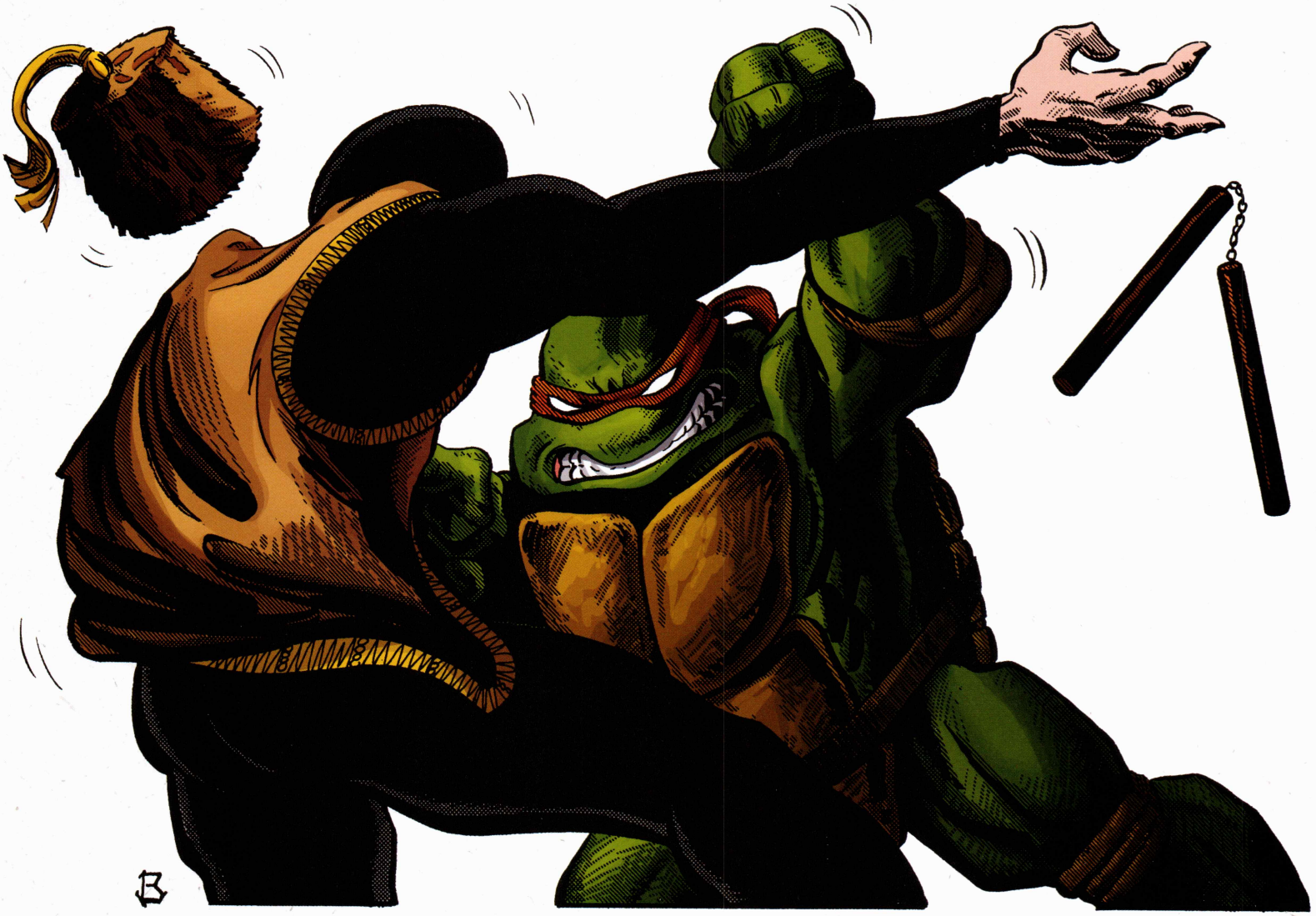
Bonuses: +3 to Strike, +2 to Parry, +2 to Dodge, +5 to Damage.

Weapon Proficiencies: Gun hands (The guns are actually built right into the hands. There are ammo feeds in the arms, which explains the great number of bullets). Can shoot six times per round, but the shots are unaimed with a +1 to Strike. **Total rounds:** 100.

Note: It is immediately obvious that the sheriff is a robot. It keeps shooting until it runs out of ammo and then fights hand-to-hand. Blasting the head with a total of 80 SDC immobilizes the robot. Otherwise, all of its 400 SDC must be eliminated.

THE AMBUSH FROM ABOVE

The moment the sheriff goes down, our heroes are shot at from the rooftops. If nobody sees them before they open fire, then Bert will shout a warning, giving them a chance to scatter for cover just seconds before the goons start shooting.



There is plenty of cover, including the vehicle(s) in which they drove into town, an overturned wagon, an empty water trough, pickle barrels, and fence or porch posts.

They can go inside the buildings (most are completely empty of furnishings), but many have Chiquita's henchmen lurking inside. Roll on the following table whenever a building is entered.

LURKING HENCHMEN IN BUILDINGS TABLE

01-10: 2D4 ninja henchmen, each is armed with kusarigama (1D8 damage) and a knife (1D6 damage).

11-20: Two ninja henchmen armed with swords (1D6 damage).

21-30: 1D4 goons with automatic pistols (2D6 damage).

31-40: One ninja with a bo staff (1D8 damage).

41-50: Two goons: One is armed with a shotgun (5D6 damage, 2 shots), the second with a laser rifle (6D6 damage, 20 shots).

51-60: Two ninja armed with large swords (1D8 damage).

61-70: A goon thug, 300 lbs of muscle, 4 actions per round, +3 to Strike, +6 to Parry, +6 to Dodge, +6 to Damage. And... a ninja armed with a pair of sai (1D6 damage).

71-96: Empty building.

97-00: 1D4+2 ninja armed with various weapons.

Note: See *Typical Ninja* and *Typical Goon* entries on page 227.

THE GUNMEN ON THE ROOFTOPS

The seven assailants on the rooftops are located on both sides of the street; three on the left, four on the right. Two on both sides are armed with *laser rifles* (6D6 damage, 20 shots), while the others are armed with *AK-47 Russian assault rifles* (4D6 damage, 30 shots). In all other ways, they are Typical Goons.

THE FINAL MOVES

When the heroes are finished with the gunmen, they find that they have worked their way down the street and are only a half dozen buildings away from the O.K. Corral.

Bert is gone and does not reply to anybody calling his name. However, it does not seem that Chiquita has him either.

If Ener-tron was not captured or befriended in the earlier adventure, he appears 50 yards behind the group, bellows a challenge, and start blasting.

Or...

If Karl Wilson or Joseph (*the K.O.W. mutant*) have been recruited by Chiquita, they can be substituted for Ener-tron.

Or...

If the heroes are very powerful, all three could join the battle.

Halfway through the fight, the *assault helicopter* rises into the air above the O.K. Corral and starts shooting. There is no concern for property, so the entire town is being blasted with glee. *See the helicopter stats, below.*

CHIQUITA, AT LAST

When the helicopter and the villains outside have been defeated, the group has only Chiquita and what henchmen she may have with her inside the O.K. Corral.

Game Masters, we have itemized the various elements so that you can better orchestrate the conclusion of this adventure

1.) The O.K. Corral is a two-story, large barn-like structure. The bottom floor of the corral is the area for cattle or horses; this means the center is a large open area that runs the length of the building, while animal stalls line the walls.

The second floor is the hayloft, a sort of indoor balcony that runs along all four walls. A railing is all that stops one from falling into the center area of the first floor.

2.) Gaining entry can be done by using one of three doors. *The front,* big double doors used for the livestock, the identical doors in the *rear,* or the smaller door of the hayloft on the second floor in *the front.* Of course, to use the door in the hayloft means that the character must climb or fly up seven yards to reach it.

3.) The enemy within includes 2D4 ninja henchmen up in the hayloft (two right by the hayloft door), the ninja leader (Shadow Lord), and Chiquita herself. Game Masters may beef-up the number and power of the final opponents if the player characters are too powerful.

4.) If the Blue Ox was captured in the earlier adventure, it is parked safely inside, facing the back door. *Two ninjas* are in the cab and try to run over anybody who comes through the back door. They keep going, crash through the doors, and drive away, presumably with the microchips on board. There are *two more ninja* in the trailer who fling the trailer doors open and fire a *bazooka,* at any pursuers (2D4×10 damage, requires 3 actions to reload). The two also have the usual ninja weapons and abilities. **Note:** The crates are empty, the microchips are gone!

5.) Chiquita attacks by swinging or leaping down from the hayloft and kicking the nearest person in the chops, followed by a titanic blow from her glowing fist. She is wearing a special *power exoskeleton* that gives her deadly strength on top of her formidable martial arts skills. See *Chiquita's* entry on page 227.

Chiquita does *not* fight to the death and stops as soon as it is obvious that she cannot win, or when she is down to 30 SDC points, whichever comes first.

6.) Shadow Master, the ninja leader, fights at Chiquita's side trying to protect her as much as he can, or engages characters who are sneaking up from the other side.

7.) Bert to the rescue! *Suggested Plot Option:* If the characters are losing to Chiquita, Bert pops out of nowhere and catches her off guard, doing significant damage (blasts her armored exoskeleton, wounds her, doing double damage, knocks her out, or stuns her, etc.). This should give the heroes a chance to attack and beat her down to a point where she *surrenders.* **Note:** Bert makes a point of capturing Chiquita alive, just in case she is his daughter.

If the heroes are doing fine against Chiquita, then Bert surfaces after she has surrendered, saying, "Whooo Boy! You guys are good. Really good! But you should have somebody watch your back." With those words, he tosses a couple of handcuffed ninja out of the shadows of a stall. "And there's another four of their buddies sleepin' it off out back."

8.) Is Chiquita Bert's daughter? Bert must know.

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE PLAYERS:

Bert looks Chiquita over, shaking his head. There are really no physical traits to answer the question. Yes, there could be a resemblance, now that he's looking for one, but...

"So you gonna keep me guessing or what?" he snarls, jerking her head back with his hand

Chiquita smiles a devilish grin as she returns Bert's stare.

"What if I was, Hmmmmm? Would it make a difference?" Her voice is laced with the tones of contempt and hate. Bert remains silent and grim-faced. He doesn't even blink.

"Hello, Daddy," she purrs, "glad to make your acquaintance. I've been told so very much about you."

Bert remains unflinching, like a statue carved from granite.

"Ohhhh, Daddy, no kiss for your little girl? Aren't you glad to see me? Is it because I'm a bad little girl? Ahhhh, I just take after my father... (a dramatic pause and then loudly and with anger)... the traitor who killed my mother!! The man who used her and threw her away in the name of his country! What kind of man leaves his pregnant wife to the dogs?"

She spits in his face.

Bert remains silent and motionless, while one lone tear trickles down his cheek. His tormentor apparently does not notice.

Chiquita pauses, smiles, and says softly, "You are the tough one, aren't you! Not a word. Not a tear. Don't you believe me?... No answer, hmmm. Well, I'll do you a favor old man. You beat me. Hell, you gave me a wild time of it, so out of respect for a worthy opponent, I'll tell you the truth. I am not your daughter."

She laughs long and hard, "But I sure had you going, didn't I? Yes, I did. I could see it in your eyes. Ha! Intelligence said that this ploy would work. Who would have thought that the infamous and indestructible 'Bert McClusky' would be haunted by ghosts."

Bert remains unmoving, but growls, "Git this woman outta my sight."

"Temper, temper, McClusky," laughs Chiquita, "you were almost my daddy." She will continue to laugh and make tasteless jokes that cut into Bert's soul until she is removed from his presence.

THE WRAP-UP

If the Blue Ox was stolen in the earlier adventure the microchips are still missing, but Bert solves that problem. He found a little computer network in the back of the post office and after eliminating the goon guard, was able to find that the "chips" are en route to a ship docked in California. The proper authorities have been notified and will easily intercept the cargo before it ever leaves the country. Likewise, the local authorities should be on their way to the ghost town too. How? "Heck, I just rang 'em up on the phone." The police will arrive in 20 minutes.

As everyone unwinds, Bert looks especially weary.

READ THE FOLLOWING:

Bert pulls a timeworn photograph from his wallet and smiles a sad smile. "That's me an' my wife. You know, on one hand, I was terrified that Chiquita was my daughter. Left alone never knowing what happened, growing up with hate all those years. Hate that turned her into that... that... (chuckle)... well, into that! I'm relieved that wasn't the case.

"Then again, I kinda wish she was my little girl. I mean, maybe I could reach her, change her. (pause)... Hey, don't say a word. I know, it's crazy. And I must be gettin' older, softer, and loonier than I thought. People like that are evil and don't change easy."

"Ahhhhhhhh." Bert stretches and leans against the Blue Ox. "We did a good job. Made a fine team. Thanks. But I think I'll leave all this adventurin' to you younger guys. I'm glad I'm retired."

He puts his arm around one of you and grunts, "Wanna beer or a soda? I'm buying."

GAME MASTER'S CHOICE
PLOT OPTION...

As Bert walks away, arm in arm with one of his new pals, one of the other heroes notices a woman's gold locket lying in the dust. They recognize it was worn by Chiquita. The chain must have broken during combat or when she was escorted away. Inside the locket is a most disturbing picture. A woman and a little girl. The woman is definitely Bert's wife, the little girl is four or five years old and greatly resembles Chiquita!

What does this mean? Did Chiquita lie? Is she Bert's daughter? Bert said his wife died two years after he was forced to leave Cuba. If this is his wife and daughter, the photo was taken more than three years later. Does his wife still live? If so, why did the CIA tell Bert otherwise? Or is all this just part of the plot to trick Bert into believing that Chiquita is his daughter?

Does the character show the locket to Bert?

Does he tell his teammates or the police?

Does the group sneak into Cuba to check things out for themselves?

The End?

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

TYPICAL NINJA HENCHMAN

Alignment: Miscreant or Aberrant

Hit Points: 28 **SDC:** 38

Average Age: 26 **Weight:** 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 6 inches

Attributes: IQ 12, PS 17, PP 17, PE 14, Spd 15, others average.

Experience Level: Fourth

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Ninjutsu, Four actions per round.

Bonuses: +5 Strike, +5 Parry, +5 Dodge, +2 Damage, +5 Roll.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Sword, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Paired Weapons, WP Targeting (Shuriken); +1 Strike, +1 Parry.

Skills of Note: General Athletics, Acrobatics, Body Building, Advanced Swimming 82%, Prowl 78%, Pilot: Auto 90%.

Weapons: Half the ninja have a Kusarigama (1D10 damage) and 2 Shurikens (1D4 damage). The other half have a ninja short sword (2D6 damage) and a pair of Sai (1D6 damage). **Note:** Feel free to add or adjust weapons as desired.

Armor: None.

TYPICAL GOON

Alignment: Anarchist or Miscreant

Hit Points: 20 **SDC:** 30

Average Age: 20 **Weight:** 180 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 11 inches

Attributes: IQ 8, PS 15, PE 12, all others are average.

Experience Level: Second

Combat Skills: Basic Hand to Hand, Two actions per round.

Bonuses: +2 Parry, +2 Dodge, +2 Roll.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt, WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun, WP Shotgun, WP Rifle (+1 Strike).

Skills of Note: Pilot: Auto 78%, Pilot: Truck 68%, Body Building.

Weapons: Double Barrel Shotgun (5D6 damage; two shots) or Uzi (3D6 damage).

Armor: None

GAME MASTER NOTE

The goons and the ninjas all try to escape as soon as it is apparent that they have lost a battle. The ninjas easily slip away using the Prowl skill, while the goons run off.

If any of the gun-wielding thugs are captured and interrogated, they know little to reveal. They were hired by some Japanese guy (one of the ninjas) to be the muscle at the garage for $1200 dollars each for one day's work. They know nothing about "Chiquita."

Captured ninjas cannot be made to talk. Even psionic probes extract minimal information. All that *may* be uncovered is that they are the loyal servants of international Cuban criminal, Chiquita. They are after the cargo in the truck, something about microchips, and revenge on Bert.

SHADOW LORD

The leader of the ninja is also Chiquita's sensei. He cares deeply for her, but he will not fight to the death to protect her from the heroes, knowing full well that they will not kill her in cold blood. Furthermore, he may slip away using *stealth* and disguise, because he knows that Chiquita is an escape artist. If Shadow Lord escapes, he arranges Chiquita's escape at a later time (within 1D4 days).

Alignment: Miscreant

Hit Points: 52 **SDC:** 94 (AR 17 from Chi Gung, see below)

Age: 42 **Weight:** 155 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 8 inches

Attributes: IQ 15, MA 17, ME 18, PS 21, PP 20, PE 24, PB 11, Spd 21

Experience Level: Eighth

Combat Skills: Ninjutsu, Five actions per round; Critical Strike on a natural 17-20 or from behind (and does triple damage).

Bonuses: +6 to Initiative, +6 to Strike, +6 to Parry, +6 to Dodge, +6 to Damage, +6 to Roll.

Martial Arts Powers: Stealth techniques (boosts Prowl, below), Into Jutsu (escape artist): can escape any bond in 1D6 rounds, Hensho Jutsu (Disguise) 89%, Stone Ox (adds to PE and SDC), Falling (no damage from a 50-foot fall and only one point of damage from each additional 50 feet), Iai-Jutsu (+6 initiative), and Chi Gung which gives the ninja leader a natural Armor Rating of 17 for the first 10 rounds.

Weapon Proficiencies of Note: WP Sword, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Paired Weapons, WP Targeting (Shuriken); +3 to Strike and +3 to Parry.

Skills of Note: General Athletics, Acrobatics, Body Building, Climbing 98%, Advanced Swimming 98%, Prowl 92%, and Pilot: Automobile 98%, Computer Operation 80%.

Weapons: Sa Tjat Koen (1D10 damage), Shuriken (1D4 damage).

Vehicle: A Black SUV hidden nearby.

CHIQUITA

Chiquita is beautiful, intelligent, deceitful, and a master of manipulation; all the ingredients for the making of a successful international spy and *femme fatale*. She was once a secret agent for the Cuban and Russian governments, but her fierce independence and stubbornness soon sabotaged that career. If her superiors told her to go left, she would go right, and still get the job got done. Eventually, she decided to quit and become an "independent." Now she works for herself. A mercenary for hire.

She entered the world scene only a few years ago, but her escapades include espionage, smuggling, robbery, extortion, assassination, protection, and special operations.

She will not sell her services to the United States government (in fact, the U.S., seems to be an unofficial personal enemy), but will deal freely with North American, South American, and European criminal cartels, third-world governments, Russia, and Cuba. She will *not* work for terrorists in operations that intentionally hurt innocent citizens, like blowing up buildings, but she will gladly engage in schemes that undermine governments or industry. She is very egocentric and takes a number of missions for the sheer challenge of them.

Although Chiquita can be frighteningly calculating and cruel, she has a strange respect for people who seem to be sincere, honest, truthful, and loyal. However, if she is led to trust somebody and they betray or deceive her, she will hunt them down and kill them without mercy. She also respects people who give her a run for her money. Remember, she loves nothing more than a true challenge.

Her espionage training began in Cuba where she was given to the mysterious ninja sensei known only as the *Shadow Lord.* It is he who has taught Chiquita the arts of ninjutsu. They have grown together like father and daughter.

Alignment: Aberrant

Hit Points: 32 **SDC:** 73

Age: 27 **Weight:** 145 lbs **Height:** 5 ft 10 inches

Attributes: IQ 17, MA 20, ME 13, PS 16, PP 18, PE 20, PB 24, Spd 19

Experience Level: Fourth

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Ninjutsu, Three actions per round; critical strike on a natural 19-20 or from behind.

Bonuses: Bonuses: +5 to Initiative, +5 to Strike, +5 to Parry, +5 to Dodge, +1 to Damage, +5 to Roll; +4% skill bonus, 65% chance to evoke trust or intimidation, 78% to charm or impress.

Martial Arts Powers: Stealth techniques (boosts Prowl, below), Into Jutsu (escape artist): can escape any bond in 1D6 rounds, Hensho Jutsu (disguise) 64%, Stone Ox (adds to PE and SDC), Falling (no damage from a 50 foot fall, only one point of damage from each additional 50 feet), Iai-Jutsu (+5 initiative).

Weapon Proficiencies of Note: WP Knife, WP Blunt, WP Chain, WP Paired Weapons, WP Targeting (Shuriken); +3 to Strike and +3 to Parry. WP Handgun, WP Submachine Gun.

Skills of Note: General Athletics, Acrobatics, Body Building, Climbing 82%, Advanced Swimming 82%, Prowl 78%, and Pilot: Automobile 90%, Computer Operation 75%.

Weapons: A custom .45 Submachine Gun (4D6 damage, Range 600 feet, +1 to Strike), a worn U.S. military issue survival knife (1D6), Shuriken (1D4).

Armor: *See the Exo-Skeleton, below.*

Vehicle: A Black SUV hidden nearby.

CHIQUITA'S POWERED EXOSKELETON

A full metal armored suit that enhances the wearer's strength and vaguely resembles a black suit of samurai armor.

Armor Rating: 12. **SDC:** 300

Physical Strength: 25

Strength Damage Bonus: +10

Weapons Systems

Knuckle Blades (right hand): 3D6 plus Strength damage bonus; retractable.

Laser Blaster (left hand): 4D6 damage, Range 120 feet.

MELVIN "BERT" McCLUSKY

By all appearances, Bert McClusky is an ordinary Joe-Rig. A husky truck driver in his mid-fifties clad in flannel shirt, down vest, jeans, baseball cap, and cowboy boots. But appearances can be deceiving. Bert is a former CIA agent.

He was a decorated hero of the Gulf War and went on to join the CIA in the late 90s. His most famous and painful case was a secret operation in Cuba in which he was forced to abandon the woman he loved. About 20 years later, he left the agency, but his wanderlust entices him to take occasional *freelance* assignments, especially ones that he believes in.

When not an active operative, Bert is doing one of three things: sitting at home reading books and watching movies, enjoying a friendly game of pool or other sport (loves baseball and football), or hauling cargo as a freelance trucker in his rig, the Blue Ox.

Bert McClusky is a patriotic, loyal, cheerful soul who values life and freedom above all else. While his temper can flare on occasion, he is a no-nonsense kind of guy who is hard-working and can be counted on to get the job done. He tends to be a loner,

is unmarried, and does not womanize. He is usually open-minded and optimistic about people and the world.

Alignment: Scrupulous

Hit Points: 48 **SDC:** 64

Age: 56 **Weight:** 210 lbs **Height:** 5 ft, 11 inches

Attributes: IQ 13, MA 14, ME 22, PS 20, PP 16, PE 18, PB 12, Spd 12

Experience Level: Seventh

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand Expert, Five actions per round.

Bonuses: +4 to Strike, +4 to Parry, +4 to Dodge, +8 to Damage, +3 to Roll, +2 to Pull Punch.

Weapon Proficiencies: WP Blunt, WP Knife, WP Handgun, WP Rifle, WP Shotgun (+3 to Strike).

Skills of Note: General Athletics, Body Building, Advanced Swimming 82%, Pilot: Automobile 98%, Pilot: Truck 96%, Palming 55%, Concealment 50%, Land Navigation 68%, Locksmith 80%, Auto-mechanics 71%, Demolitions and Disposal, Speaks Spanish and Korean.

Weapons: See Bert's arsenal in the Blue Ox; includes grenades, .45 pistol, and AR-15 rifle.

Armor: Tactical Vest AR 10 SDC 70

Vehicle: See the *Blue Ox truck* and *Runner Car* listed on pages 194-195.

VEHICLES OF NOTE

NINJA MINI-CAR

AR: 6 **SDC:** 150

Maximum Speed: 85 mph (134 km)

Note: Penalty of -10% to Piloting rolls for any special maneuvers.

TYPICAL SUV

AR: 8 **SDC:** 500

Maximum Speed: 150 mph (241 km)

Note: Bonus of +10% to Piloting rolls in off-road conditions.

HUEY 1-D ASSAULT HELICOPTER

AR: 6 **SDC:** 220

Length: 57 ft (17m)

Maximum Speed: 130 mph (205 km)

Maximum Range: 300 miles (480 km)

Maximum Passengers: 8 people or approximately 3000 lbs

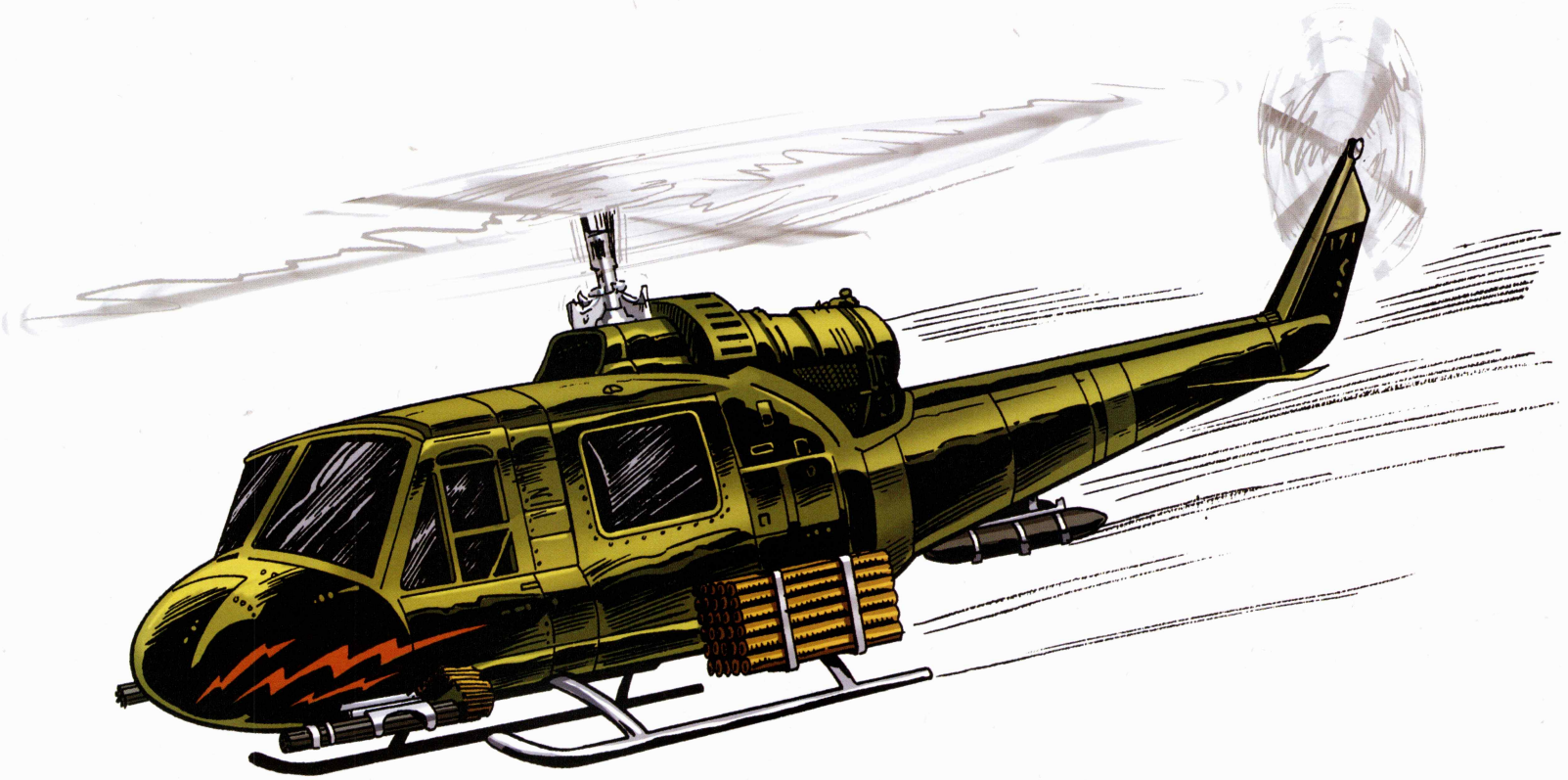
Weapons Systems

XM-3 2.75" Rocket Launcher: 1D6×10 damage, Effected Area: 40 ft, Payload: 48 rockets, Range: 2k yards/meters, Actions Per Round: One.

40mm M-75 Grenade Launcher ("Thumper"): 2D4×10 damage, Effected Area: 20 ft, Payload: 200, Range: 1k yards/meters, Actions Per Round: One

.50 Caliber Machinegun: 2D4×10 damage, Effected Area: Specific target/individual, Payload: 40 bursts, Range: 2k yards/meters, Actions Per Round: Two.

Total Gunner Actions Per Round: 4.



GAME MASTER TIPS FOR TRUCKIN' TURTLES

COMBAT DIFFICULTY ADJUSTMENTS

As mentioned elsewhere, *Truckin' Turtles* is an adventure book designed for any group of 4 to 8 heroes, not just the Turtles. Consequently, as Game Master, you may have to adjust the power of the villains according to the needs and size of your playing group.

The combat difficulty can be adjusted in numerous ways. You can make the number of opponents less, their powers or weapons weaker, give the heroes some extra gimmicks or hardware, or add an NPC to the group. Conflicts should remain dangerous, but never hopeless. For instance, in the final showdown with Chiquita, if the players are running a smaller group like the four Ninja Turtles or even a larger group made up primarily by other non-powerhouse types of heroes, eliminate Chiquita's power armor exoskeleton... and possibly Shadow Lord as well!

PERSONALIZE TO TASTE

Likewise, you as the Game Master should feel free to add touches that will personalize the adventures for both your preferences and those of your players. This adventure is designed to give you *new ideas* about creating and running adventures as much as anything else. It is not a hard and fast scenario that should not be deviated from. Instead, it is a tight outline for adventure.

Expand or contract the adventure outline as you see fit. Add new scenes, villains, ideas, and so on, as much as you wish. Or play it as presented here. Or pull out any one of the adventures or villains and slot it into your current campaign. Role-playing is a flexible and malleable thing that can be shaped by your imagination. That means you can do anything you can imagine.

WHAT IF THEY DEVIATE FROM THE PLAN

Anybody who has been a Game Master for any length of time knows that the best-laid plans can be *mutated* by players who send their characters off on some unforeseen tangent. This is a good thing. It means the player is using his or her imagination and is engaged with the details of the story!

Game Masters can either go with the flow, or try to nudge events back into the desired scheme of things. Good old Bert can be the GM's tool to keep the story going in the direction he desires. After all, it is Bert's assignment, Bert's truck, and Bert behind the driver's wheel. Don't be blatantly manipulative, but use Bert to keep things running on track. However, don't be totally closed to going off on a tangent and improvising. If you've never done it, give it a try; learn to love the chaos and ingenuity.

Another tool not utilized by a surprising number of Game Masters is... are you ready?.. *Talk to your players!* Seriously, as the GM, you are like the director of a film. This means that you may need to give a player a bit of direction or insight into their character, or the situation, for them to be comfortable portraying their character properly. **For Example:** One of the players is excited about going to a particular place, let's say Las Vegas, because his character has certain powers that could make him and the group a fortune. The other players like this idea too. As the GM, I could improvise and say, "Sure, you're on your way to Las Vegas." This might be fine at the end of this Truckin' Turtles adventure, but totally inappropriate in the context of the story at an earlier point. It is up to the GM to say, "Hold on a minute. You mean to tell me that Chiquita has the Blue Ox, is willing to trade the microchips for Bert, and thereby preserve national security, and you're going to run off to Vegas instead? First, Bert will never go for that and will try to take on Chiquita alone if he has to. Secondly, any heroes with a good Alignment would never consider leaving at a time like this, and even your Anarchist character isn't likely to leave his pals in their hour of need, is he?" All the GM is doing is putting the story back in perspective.

Likewise, there should always be a *cause and effect.* If the characters *cause* a bar fight, the *effect* will be they are distracted, leaving the Blue Ox unattended, and the police are likely to arrive. The *effect* of the police showing up, being that the characters may have to run from the police, possibly even fight the police, or try to talk their way out of trouble. A snotty attitude or a lack of cooperation with the authorities may lead to a delay or even time in jail. And so on. Always try to imagine the whole picture. Doing so will make your games richer and more exciting.

ALTERNATE FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

If the heroes lose the Blue Ox or get separated from the rest of the group, they will have to find an alternate means of transportation.

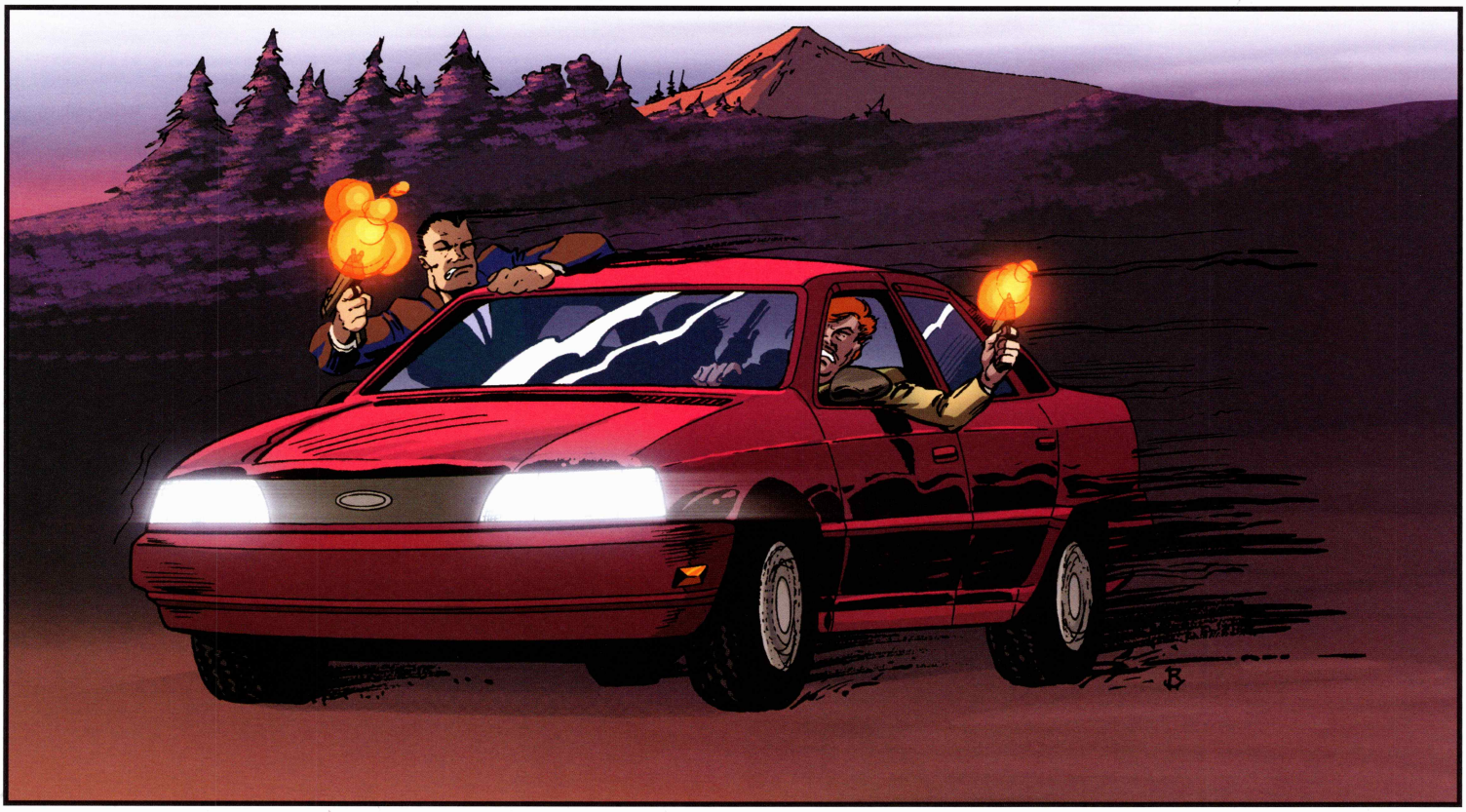
Cars and trucks are always available for rent or purchase in any city and most large towns. Car dealers of new and used vehicles can be found in most towns and all cities. If the characters don't have the cash to rent (usually about $300 with deposit and insurance) or buy a vehicle (a clunker could cost as little as $500, but most will cost $2000 to $5000, while new cars are $20,000 and up), they may have to resort to theft or hitchhiking. Of course, there is always the bus or hopping a train.

Jumping on and off of a moving train requires that a character rolls a *Strike* of 12 or higher to grab on and roll under their PP attribute to pull themselves up and keep their balance (roll two out of three). *Falling off the train* will cause 2D6 damage per 10 mph. Passenger trains typically travel between 60 and 80 mph at maximum speed, cargo trains at 20 to 50 mph. **Note:** Being run over by a train causes 2D4×100 points of damage.

An airplane could be rented, but unless it is a private plane whose pilot has been hired to fly above the highway in search of Bert and the others, regular air travel only gets the heroes from one airport to another. **Note:** Bert always keep an eye out for characters who have gotten separated and he never abandons anybody in need.

USING MAPS

If the Game Master and players want to have a strong idea of where they are at and where they are going, they can use online maps, paper road maps, and atlases. Maps and atlases usually provide information on what sort of roads are in existence, such as highways, toll roads, expressways, primary and secondary roads, dirt roads, rivers, lakes, mountains, etc. Most indicate distances between marked points. By adding up these small sections of mileage, players can get an approximate idea of how far they have traveled.



AVERAGE SPEEDS & ROAD CONDITIONS

Using the following to figure out how much road can be covered in a given amount of time.

55 mph **0.9 miles per minute (about 1 km)**

60 mph **1.0 mile per minute (1.6 km)**

65 mph **1.1 mile per minute (1.8 km)**

70 mph **1.2 mile per minute (2 km)**

80 mph **1.4 mile per minute (2.4 km)**

- **Traveling on turnpikes, interstates, and highways** where traffic is unimpeded by traffic signals will average 55 to 75 mph. Traffic and the law will rarely allow speeds to exceed 75 or 80 mph for more than a few minutes at a time. Of course, traffic, road repair, and weather conditions can reduce speed dramatically.
- **Primary roads with few traffic signals** allow an average top speed of 50 or 55 mph. Traffic and weather can reduce speed dramatically.
- **Main roads with numerous traffic signals** allow an average speed of 30 to 40 mph.
- **Secondary roads in cities and towns** allow an average speed of 40 mph.
- **Secondary roads in rural areas** usually have speeds posted at 40 to 50 mph, but speeds of 40 to 60 mph are possible depending on traffic and road conditions.
- **Dirt or gravel roads** limit safe speed to about 40 mph maximum, unless an off-road type vehicle is being driven.
- **Rush hour in and around cities and towns** always causes a dramatic increase in traffic and reduce speed by at least 2D6 miles below the posted speed limit.

OPTIONAL TABLES

The following can be used as the Game Master deems necessary. A good rule of thumb might be to roll once for every 100 miles (160 km) traveled and whenever getting back onto a highway or major road after a stop, or when changing to a new road.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION TABLE MODIFIERS

No traffic: This means that there are no vehicles within sight. Depending on road conditions and weather, the characters can put the pedal to the metal and go the posted speed limit or beyond.

Light traffic: Only a handful of vehicles are on the road. The maximum posted speed limit can be easily maintained and excessive speed is possible with few obstacles. **Penalty:** -5% on Pilot Automobile or similar skill rolls for the driver to pull a stunt.

Moderate Traffic: There are a fair number of vehicles, but traffic is flowing smoothly at 1D6 miles above the posted speed limit. To go faster means weaving in and out of traffic. **Penalty:** -10% on Piloting checks for weaving through traffic to travel faster or trying a stunt, plus another -5% for every 10 mph above 60.

Heavy Traffic: The road is crowded with vehicles, but moving along. The maximum possible speed on highways is 1D6 miles below the posted speed limit. On primary and main surface streets the max speed is 2D6 miles below the posted limit. **Penalty:** -15% on Piloting checks for weaving through traffic to travel faster or trying a stunt.

Traffic Crawls: Vehicles are moving, but at a snail's pace. Max speed is one-quarter the posted limit; i.e. 55 mph means crawling speed is 14 mph. **Penalty:** -20% on Piloting checks for a stunt.

Traffic Gridlock: The most dreaded of traffic conditions when traffic is bumper to bumper and moving at 1D4 mph. **Penalty:** -25% on Piloting checks for a stunt.

CITY & TOWN TRAFFIC TABLE

01-10 GRIDLOCK: An accident blocks the road and the problem is compounded by gawkers; stretches 2D4 miles.

11-20 HEAVY TRAFFIC: But moving along.

21-30 NO TRAFFIC: Smooth sailing.

31-40 LIGHT TRAFFIC: Looking good.

41-50 MODERATE TRAFFIC: You've seen much worse.

51-53 HEAVY TRAFFIC caused by a convoy of trucks that block the road, reducing speed.

54-57 MODERATE TRAFFIC caused by a police car sitting along the shoulder of the road. Nobody will drive above the speed limit and many are driving below.

58-60 MODERATE TRAFFIC caused by an ambulance coming through. Vehicles move to the right and slow down. Speed resumes to LIGHT 1D6 minutes after it passes.

61-70 LIGHT TRAFFIC and clear skies.

71-73 GRIDLOCK caused by construction; stretches 1D6 miles.

74-77 HEAVY TRAFFIC caused by grandpa out for a drive. Reduce speed in his lane to *heavy*. You must change lanes to go faster, otherwise gramps continues at his present speed for another 5D6 miles.

78-79 NO TRAFFIC!

80-86 MODERATE TRAFFIC due to road work.

87-88 MODERATE TRAFFIC caused by a police or sheriff car cruising at the speed limit in the fast lane.

89-91 HEAVY TRAFFIC caused by broken down car.

92-94 CRAWL caused by road work.

95-00 NO TRAFFIC!

RURAL TRAFFIC TABLE

01-10 MODERATE TRAFFIC

11-20 LIGHT TRAFFIC

21-30 NO TRAFFIC

31-40 MODERATE TRAFFIC

41-45 HEAVY TRAFFIC caused by police speed trap; "smokey" already got one speeder and is advertising it with flashing lights, another police or sheriff's car is parked down the road a bit with his radar tracking for more speeders. Lasts 2D4 miles.

46-50 CRAWL caused by (roll again) 1-25 flooding roads, 26-50 farm animals (cows, sheep, chickens, etc.) loose on the highway, 51-75 farm vehicles (tractor, etc.), or 76-00 a gala event that has brought out the crowds, like a motocross event, auction, parade, etc. The delay stretches for 3D6 miles.

51-60 LIGHT TRAFFIC

61-70 MODERATE TRAFFIC caused by a slow-moving vehicle with a "wide" load that cannot be passed. Lasts 4D6 miles.

71-80 NO TRAFFIC

81-85 GRIDLOCK caused by road construction.

86-90 HEAVY TRAFFIC caused by some drunks or mischievous youths having some fun on the road at others' expense.

91-94 MODERATE TRAFFIC caused by poor road conditions. Lasts 1D6×10 miles.

95-98 HEAVY TRAFFIC caused by an accident.

99-00 LIGHT TRAFFIC

RANDOM HOSTILE ENCOUNTERS

Use this table whenever you feel it is necessary. Encounters should occur in between the main adventures, especially through states where nothing of significance occurs. Many of these encounters are Chiquita's henchmen trying to capture the Blue Ox and Bert. They can take place on the road or at rest stops, but almost always when few spectators are present.

01-10 Ninja posing as tourists; two men and two women. *See typical ninja henchmen.*

11-20 A carload of Chiquita's gun-toting goons. They will try the reliable old stand-by; brute strength and bullets. They will even pursue our characters down the highway in a high-speed chase with guns blazing out the car's windows. Three goons are in the back seat, one in the front along with the driver. The car will be a mid-size sedan or jeep; both have about 400 SDC points. *See typical goons for stats.*

21-30 A group of 2D4 good old boys don't like the looks of our heroes, especially if mutant animals or strange-looking people are part of it. These guys aren't villains, just bullies looking for trouble. They put up a mean fight with fists, kicks, chairs, bottles, and possibly a knife, but they aren't out to kill anybody and don't fight to the death. They limp away when beaten down to taking hit point damage. *Use the same stats as a typical goon.*

31-40 1D4+1 ninja and 1D4 of Chiquita's goons. Their vehicle is a rusty, old pickup truck. The ninja are wearing flannel shirts and baseball caps. *See goons and ninja stats.*

41-45 A motorcycle gang or similar group of young toughs looking to prove themselves. There are 3D4 armed with knives, pipe clubs, and even 1D4 pistols in the group. They will fight and fight dirty until 3/4 of them have been defeated, the others flee. *Use the same stats as a typical goon.*

46-50 Ninja in shriner-type outfits and mini-cars; a total of 1D4+2. These maniacs will stop at nothing to get the Blue Ox. Two of the ninja have rifles. All have grappling hooks and the usual ninja gear. *See typical ninja.*

51-52 The familiar tasseled hats and mini-cars of Chiquita's crazy ninja are seen driving up. However, before anybody initiates an attack, Bert screams, "WAIT!!!" Whew, these guys are not ninja, they are real shriners off to a charity or parade.

53-60 A stranded vehicle. The driver is (roll again) 1-25% an attractive woman, PB 20; 26-50 a mom with a car full of 1D6+1 kids, 51-65 an old man, 66-75 an old lady, 76-90 1D4 college students, 91-00 1D4 nuns! The car problem is: 1-25 Out of gas, 26-50 A flat tire (spare is in the trunk), 51-75 Engine trouble

(fixable with 2D6×10 minutes work), 76-00 Two flat tires but only one spare (they plead for a ride to the nearest gas station).

Will our heroes be good Samaritans and stop to help?

61-64 Police pull over the Blue Ox or walk up to heroes and place them under arrest. One policeman will ask for the keys to the truck while the others will ask the heroes to turn around to be handcuffed. The cops will not offer any reasonable explanation as to why they are being arrested.

Then Bert, or one of the other heroes, will notice a pair of sai or nunchaku tucked under one officer's jacket, which will confirm his suspicion that these are *not* real police officers, but more of Chiquita's henchmen.

There are 1D4+2 *fake policemen*; half are Chiquita's goons and the others are ninja. They will fight until killed or rendered unconscious. The fake cops may even sucker innocent bystanders to help them capture these *criminals* resisting arrest.

65-70 Some wild women looking for some fun; all are fit and attractive (PB 17 or higher). These are really more of Chiquita's ninja, but they will not become a problem unless a character(s) is stupid enough to respond to their flirtation. When the moment is right the ninja women will attack and may try to hold one of the characters hostage. *See typical ninja henchman.*

71-75 Chiquita has found some unscrupulous truckers who are willing to do her dirty work for the right price. They don't know or care why this woman wants the truck and Bert, all they care about is the $10,000 apiece that they'll receive when they deliver them to her goons back at one of the rest stops.

This can be a hand-to-hand battle with 1D4+2 big, burley, 280 lb, 6 ft truckers armed with tire irons and revolvers. Same basic stats as *a typical goon,* but add +20 SDC, +6 to damage, and each has a total of four actions per round. Or they could first try to run the Blue Ox off the road with their own 18-wheel trucks. Or set up a roadblock, etc.

76-80 Criminals! These could be escaped prisoners, truck hijackers, or just ordinary bandits pulling a robbery. 2D4 crooks armed with pistols and shotguns are the threat. *Same as a typical goon* but add 10 SDC and +4 to damage.

81-85 A truck in front of the team loses its load. Bert must slow down and swerve to avoid hitting various objects (egg crates, metal ball bearings, metal piping, or even worse cars!). Driving skill penalty is -40%; a failed roll means the Blue Ox runs off the road and possibly crashes 1-40% chance. *See crash table.*

86-90 Cultists in dune buggies try to hijack the truck. They are armed with semi-automatic assault rifles and automatic pistols. 1D4+2 dune buggies each contain a driver and an armed passenger. *Same as typical goons.*

91-00 Tetsubishi, ninja caltrops, cover the road! There is a 1-55% chance that the driver sees them in time and is able to stop before he runs over them and blows his tires. 56-00 means that the driver could not stop in time and has run over them, puncturing 3D4 tires on the 18-wheel truck (1D4 wheels for a car). If the wheels are punctured, roll under driving skill to maintain control of the vehicle; penalty is -50%. If the driver keeps going he threatens to damage the vehicle even more, speed is reduced by half, and all control rolls are -50%.

Whether the Blue Ox stops or slows down, 3D6 ninja leap out of their hiding places and attack with grappling hooks and weapons.

OPTIONAL CRASH TABLE

Any time a shot on a car penetrates the armor, either by a roll over the car's AR, on a called shot, or by a "natural" twenty to strike, there's a chance that the vehicle may be crippled by the damage. Roll Percentile dice.

01-05 Engine on Fire: Speed Class goes down 1D6 level(s). GM rolls 4D10; that's how many rounds the characters have before the fire spreads to the fuel tank. If they can pull over and extinguish the fire before that, then no further damage will be taken.

06-08 Tire Shot Out: Speed reduced by a third; driver must make a Control Roll at -5% per *each* 10mph that the vehicle was traveling.

09-14 Frame is Seriously Dented: Alignment problems; drop Speed Class by 1D6.

15-20 Hole in Radiator: Over the next 6 rounds the engine will get hotter and hotter. After that there's a 20% chance, every round, that the engine will suddenly stop. Steam pours out from under the hood.

21-25 Hole in Brake Line: Brakes don't work anymore. No other problems until the character tries to stop.

26-30 Electrical System Damaged: The control panel inside the crew compartment catches on fire. Until the smoke is cleared and the fire is put out, Control Rolls are an additional -30% each round, or maneuver. All attacks are impossible until the smoke is stopped.

31-35 Steering Damaged: Take -50% on all Control Rolls.

36-50 Cosmetic Damage: The vehicle loses chrome, paint, and trim. Looks bad, but no real damage.

51-60 Light Knocked Out: Depending on where the shot came from, either the headlights or the brake lights are knocked out. Could be serious at night.

61-65 Exterior Electronics Disabled: Any electronic devices on the outside of the vehicle are destroyed.

66-70 Battery Destroyed: Not a problem right away, but the vehicle can't be started again without a jump or a replacement.

71-75 Alternator/Generator Wrecked: The car stops recharging itself and is running off battery power alone. Will work for 8D4 minutes before draining the battery, then quit.

76-85 Transmission Fluid Leak or Damage: Shifting becomes impossible and the transmission will start making hideous grinding noises. The vehicle will continue operating for another 4D6 rounds.

86-90 Leak in Gas Tank: The vehicle will lose one gallon a minute until the fuel runs out.

91-95 Fragments in Driver's Compartment: Roll 2D6 damage for each occupant. Driver must make a Control Roll at -50%.

96-00 No Serious Damage: However, make Control Roll at -10%.

TRUCK STOPS, GREASY SPOONS, TAVERNS, & POOL HALLS

"Truck Stop" and "Eats" are three favorite words of truckers on the long haul. These words also represent an extremely loose network of gas stations, restaurants, stops; an oasis for those who do a lot of cross-country travel.

TRUCK STOPS

Truck stops are the mini-malls of the road. While most stops will have at least a small convenience store, restaurant, fuel pump, and service station, the larger stops are like small communities. These expanded facilities may include several restaurants, taverns, car & truck wash, general store, convenience stores, motels, banking & check cashing, a large 24-hour garage, as well as several gas stations. Some even contain the offices for the various state and interstate trucking regulatory agencies. There is no set number of miles between truck stops. Generally, they can be found wherever there is a great deal of truck traffic, usually near major highways and industrial or shipping communities.

CAFES & GREASY SPOONS

When a truck stop isn't handy, you can bet that a greasy spoon diner is. Most of these places are independently owned "mom and pop" type outfits usually named after their founding owners, with names like "Angie's," "Pat's," "Bob's Place," etc. A neon sign usually marks the place with the immortal word: "EAT."

Most are small restaurants that cater to truckers. There is a long counter with high stools where patrons can sit. Behind the counter are glass displays with alluring pies, donuts, and, most important, *coffee*. The kitchen is usually hidden behind the counter area. For those who wish a little more privacy, there are a dozen booths. An old jukebox, with its selection of country favorites and "recent" top 40 hits, is stuck by the coat rack.

Service, food quality, and cleanliness depend entirely upon the establishment's owners. If the head cook is some bruiser named "Cookie," cleanliness is usually a facade or an accident.

The menu is simple: burgers, sandwiches, soup of the day, eggs, pancakes, hash browns, meat and gravy dishes, donuts, pie, coffee and soda pop. Some serve beer and liquor, but not most.

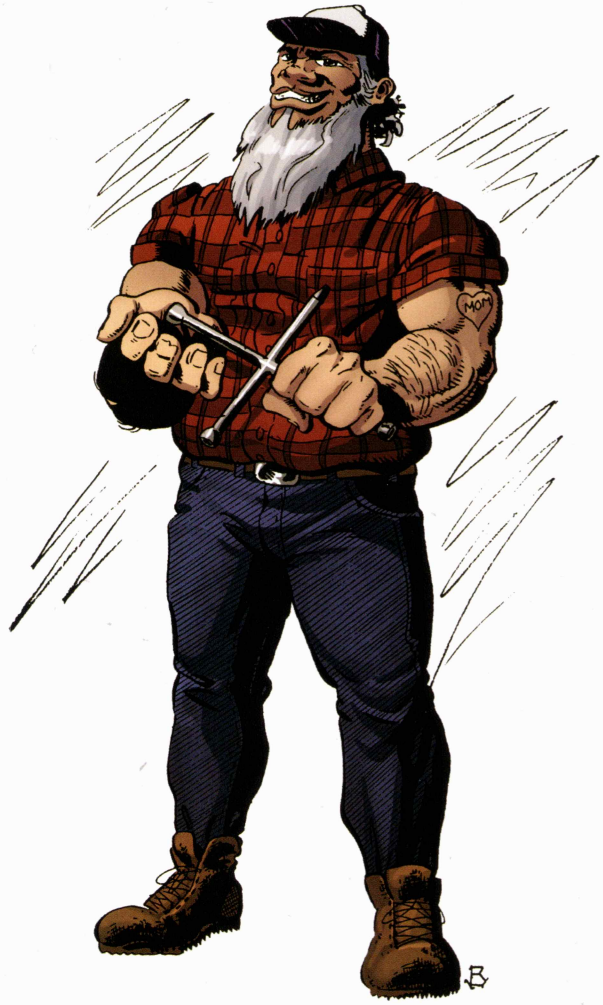
TAVERNS & BARS

All taverns, bars, and saloons are located on a secondary road away from the main highway. They can range from long, narrow holes in the walls with strong booze, to large taverns complete with pool tables and live entertainment. While many bars have been *territorialized* as the local hangout for a particular group or neighborhood, there are just as many places that are open and friendly to all travelers.

Of course, booze and contrasting socioeconomic backgrounds can lead to clashes. Some of these incidents are simple shouting matches, while others can turn into fistfights or worse.

POOL HALLS

Pool halls are making a comeback these days, but are still fairly few and far between. Still, any place that has more than two pool tables, and patrons play pool as much or more than they drink, can be considered a pool hall. Almost all pool halls serve liquor.



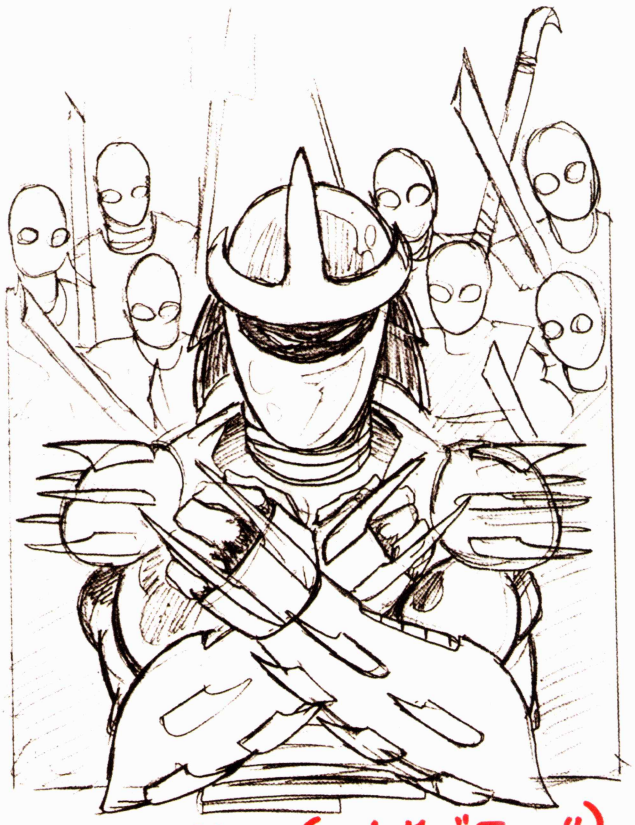
GAME MASTER NOTE

NON-HUMAN CHARACTERS ON THE ROAD

Taking the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, a mutant animal, or any other character with non-human features into a truck stop has certain inherent problems. Obviously, just waltzing into an establishment in full costume is going to cause a commotion. If it doesn't immediately scare people, it will certainly cause the other patrons to stare and whisper. The owner may decline to serve them because: "We don't want no trouble from costumed freaks." Or "Dressed in that getup, you must be looking for trouble." It is possible that the owner and his clients may think this is all a gag or "cute", but the owner is likely to demand payment first and keep an eye on them. Drunks and troublemakers will be drawn to them like a moth to a flame. And forget about privacy; all eyes and ears are trained on the group the whole time.

In many situations, a simple disguise like a wide brim hat, overcoat, or other articles of clothing that cover up the unusual features, will be enough to get the person by unnoticed. This is especially true of bars and restaurants that are dark and crowded. Furthermore, if the character acts like a normal Joe who belongs there, nobody is likely to look closely or think otherwise. Sitting away from the main crowd, the counter, and juke box is always a good idea.

If the characters are known celebrities, the problem will be similar in that they may be swarmed over by adoring fans or challenged by cocky punks who have something to prove by fighting a hero.



The Shredder (and the "Foot")
1/4 page

JULY 23, 1985

KEVIN –

HERE ARE A BUNCH OF COPIES OF PENCILLED ROUGHS FOR THE TMNT GAME. I'VE INDICATED ON EACH ONE WHAT SIZE IT'S INTENDED TO BE; MOSTLY, THEY WILL BE REDUCED JUST A BIT. MORE WILL BE COMING YOUR WAY SOON! IN A FEW DAYS WE SHOULD HAVE ALL OF THE SPOT ILLOS PENCILLED AND WILL JUMP RIGHT INTO INKING THEM. KEVIN'S STARTING WORK ON THE COVER TONIGHT, AND I THINK IT'S GOING TO BE PRETTY SHARP!

LET US KNOW WHICH PANELS OUT OF THE BOOK YOU WOULD LIKE COPIED, FOR INCLUSION AS SPOT ART, AND WE WILL GET THEM OFF TO YOU ASAP.

TAKE CARE!

-PETER

THE MAKING OF TMNT & OTHER STRANGENESS

A BRIEF HISTORY BY KEVIN SIEMBIEDA

How do you capture lightning in a bottle like the **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**?

I suspect it's a little luck, the right timing, and equal doses of inspiration, creative energy, and pure magic.

If there were a true, repeatable formula, you'd see it happen every day. Instead, it is a rare and precious occurrence. And Palladium Books was fortunate to capture it a second time with its **TMNT & Other Strangeness Role-Playing Game**.

PALLADIUM'S LUCK AND TIMING

I saw something special in the very first TMNT comic I read. That happened to be issue #2. I love comic books, so I knew about TMNT and knew it was hot, but I couldn't lay my hands on issue #1. Thankfully, I snagged #2, read it, and loved it. Somehow, I immediately saw the potential of turning it into a role-playing game (RPG).

I was telling my wife, Maryann, how TMNT would make a super-fun RPG, provided I could track down the creators at this Mirage Studio and they would allow me to create rules for making *any* animal into crimefighting superheroes like the Ninja Turtles. I kid you not, five minutes later, I get a call from a stranger. Our conversation went something like this ...

"Have you seen the TMNT comic book?" asked the voice on the phone.

"Yes. I just finished reading issue #2," I said in stunned bewilderment.

"I think it would make a great supplement to Heroes Unlimited," said the stranger.

"I think it would make a great stand-alone RPG that could be used with Heroes Unlimited," I exclaimed.

"Palladium should license the TMNT and do it," he said.

"Yes, I agree, but I'll need to track down the creators."

"I already have it," said the stranger. "I can give you the telephone number right now." (I forget if it was the number to the Studio or whether it was to Peter Laird directly. My first few conversations were with Peter.)

The stranger introduced himself and we excitedly talk about the possibilities. He was a hopeful writer and volunteered to take a run at writing the game. Right away there were creative differences. He thought it should only feature the Ninja Turtles and other comic book characters *not* other mutant animals, and that it should be a *Heroes Unlimited*™ sourcebook not a complete game of its own.

I disagreed. I mean, who doesn't love animals? Who wouldn't want to play their own courageous mutant animal hero? I already knew people enjoyed playing non-humans in my other games, and intellectual properties (I.P.s) like *Planet of the Apes* were hugely popular. Rules for creating mutant animals was a must I insisted. He finally agreed, took my many game design notes, and I gave him a shot at writing the game.

MY NEXT CONVERSATION WAS WITH MIRAGE STUDIOS

The call went well. Peter Laird and I hit it off. I don't know if it was the fact that we were around the same age and that I knew a lot about comic books, had dabbled in the comic industry myself, had created and published (with Alex Marciniszyn) my own black and white alternative comic 10 years earlier, or what, but we just clicked. The same happened when I spoke with Kevin Eastman. Both agreed to let me run with my RPG ideas for creating other mutant animals, agreed to create a new 8 page TMNT comic exclusive to the game, and to illustrate most of the book! They were easy to work with and gave me a lot of creative freedom. I remember Peter telling me that they didn't know anything about role-playing games and that they trusted me to do what I thought was best for the gaming market. Both Kevin and Peter were top professionals even in those early days. They even trusted me to write the licensing agreement. I had a few more years experience as a publisher and understood contracts, so they thought I should draw up the agreement. So I wrote up a clear, fair contract as discussed, we all signed, and we were off to the races.

It was quite the win to have gotten Kevin and Peter to agree to illustrate the book and even create a brand-new, 8 page TMNT comic that would only appear in the RPG. (I don't think Mirage published it until years later; it may have even been after we let the license go many years later.) The comic strip and their art was a critical part of my plan. I knew if I designed this game right, with the Turtle creators doing the art, I could get the game into comic book shops as well as game stores. And once I accomplished that, we could get the rest of Palladium's RPGs into comic book shops, expanding our market presence. A plan that would work like a dream.

As I recall, Kevin Eastman asked me if I'd let him take a shot at painting the cover. I said, of course. And it was perfect. I loved it so much that I purchased the painting and hung it proudly in my house for three decades. I sold it a few years ago to Sofia Vergara as a gift for her then husband, actor and gamer Joe Manganiello.

A FATEFUL DISASTER

When the *TMNT & Other Strangeness* RPG manuscript arrived, I couldn't wait to see what the writer had done with it. Most of the incredible Eastman and Laird artwork was already done, so all that was left to do was final production – edit, tweak, typeset, and lay out the game book. That would be a few weeks' work and off to the printer. Or so I had thought.

TMNT& Other Strangeness cover sketch by Kevin Eastman.

As I read through the pages, my heart sank. The manuscript was not the work I was expecting nor the game I had been advertising as coming soon. The writer was well-intentioned, but despite our lengthy discussions about the project our creative differences were too great. I felt there was nothing I could use from the manuscript.

Now I faced having to rewrite the entire game from scratch, but that would take months. It is not uncommon to spend 1-3 years writing rules and play-testing a new role-playing game. Even though I had a very clear idea of exactly what the book should be and it would draw upon some of my existing universal game rules, I was looking at an estimated 4-6 months of hard work.

To complicate matters, I had been advertising *TMNT & Other Strangeness* in *Dragon Magazine*, so people were expecting it, and I was in the middle of writing another important RPG project. I could either spend the next two months finishing it before starting work on *TMNT & Other Strangeness* or I could dive into TMNT immediately, delaying both titles for who knew how long.

What to do?

ERICK TO THE RESCUE

The person who did understand what I wanted for this game was *Erick Wujcik.*

Erick and I had become instant friends the moment we met back in 1978. (Or was it 1979?) We both loved books, comics, role-playing games, history, and movies. Everything gave us ideas and we were game to explore those ideas. Together with six other people, Erick and I helped found the *Detroit Gaming Center* (Erick's idea), and we were both self-taught writers, artists, Game

Masters, and game designers. Erick and I were also each other's muse and sounding board. We drew inspiration from everything and each other, so we constantly shared our game ideas and solicited input. Erick had contributed to some previous Palladium RPG products, and I had helped and illustrated some of his game projects. We loved working together and spit-balling ideas. We were almost always on the same wavelength when it came to story and game design, and we loved to try to take concepts to the next level.

We shared similar approaches and philosophies about game design too. Things like nothing is written in stone, think big, and try new things but be willing to toss out ideas and mechanics that don't work. We also liked to pack our games with wow factor, strong characters, deep settings, and above all else, fun. It's a game, it needs to be fun! Fun, fast, and exciting for both the Game Master and the players. Erick and I liked to challenge ourselves, push the envelope, and try new different approaches to see what worked and what didn't. We were willing to explore all kinds of ideas, stories, characters, and game rules even if they never made it into the finished game. Exploration of ideas and rules was part of the process for us. Moreover, when it came to a licensed property, like TMNT, we felt we had an obligation to be loyal and true, not just to the creators and their fans, but also to the source material, even as we built upon it to bring that familiar world to life in a new medium.

It was no surprise then, that from our first conversation, Erick understood exactly what I wanted for *TMNT & Other Strangeness*. I had introduced him to the TMNT comics shortly after I discovered the Turtles, so he has been reading the comics books. More importantly, while I waited for the other guy's manuscript, Erick and I discussed many aspects of rules and concepts I believed critical to the success of a TMNT game with broad appeal. I explained the "other strangeness" in the title would be the rules for building *any* mutant animal character. That meant creating animal powers, animal psionics, and variations in the mutant animals' appearance, as well as needing a few villains and adventures. Erick and I spent hours upon hours brainstorming and extrapolating about the possible game mechanics and many different directions the TMNT role-playing game could take. We loved these kind of mental exercises whether they ever saw print or not. Being the generous soul that Erick was, he encouraged me to share our ideas with the book's writer. Which I did, many times, adding to my disappointment that none of it was taken.

Erick was so enamored with the various concepts that he completely wrote the Bio-E rules and Size Table just for fun, and had notes on other mutant animal creation elements. I told him not to get carried away because I had high hopes for the other guy's manuscript, and he was very upbeat about his progress. However, I also told Erick I loved his ideas and rules so much that he and I should continue to develop them for use in some future Palladium RPG project.

Back then, Erick and I spoke almost every night after my family went to bed and my nighttime writing regimen began. So like clockwork, he would call me (or I'd call him) after midnight and we would talk about our latest work and ideas. That fateful night I explained that the TMNT manuscript had arrived but was completely unusable. I was in a jam and didn't know how to get out of it. I was frustrated and distraught, but Erick was upbeat and cheerfully offered to help. Over the past six months, he and I had talked so much about the game that we both had a strong, defined outline for it in our heads and were in lock-step with what had to be done. "Let me write the mutant animal creation rules," Erick exclaimed. "But just those rules."

Erick was working on his own role-playing game projects, so he insisted he could only help out a little to get the ball rolling. That started with the mutant animal creation rules, Bio-E, and the Growth Table. But when Erick finished one thing, he'd offer to write "just one more thing." I gladly accepted, because everything he was turning in was pure gold!

MIRAGE STUDIOS
P.O. BOX 1218
SHARON, CT 06069

AUGUST 9, 1985

DEAR KEVIN,

ENCLOSED ARE THE "GUARD-'EM-WITH-YOUR-LIFE" ORIGINALS FOR THE GAME (THAT WE HAVE FINISHED SO FAR)*. ALSO ENCLOSED IS A XEROX OF THE LAST UNFINISHED ¼ PAGE DRAWING. IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, THIS ¼ PAGE PLUS 2 MORE FULL PAGE ILLOS ("SPARROW EAGLES" and "ANIMAL FARM") PLUS THE EIGHT-PAGE STRIP ARE ALL THAT WE HAVE LEFT TO FINISH AND SEND TO YOU.

THE FINISHED SUBJECTS ENCLOSED ARE:

1) APRIL O'NEIL
2) BAXTER STOCKMAN
3) THE SHREDDER
4) CASEY JONES
5) DONATELLO
6) RAPHAEL
7) MICHAELANGELO
8) LEONARDO
9) T.C.R.I. ALIEN IN ROBOT BODY
10) T.C.R.I. ALIEN
11) SPLINTER
12) TRICERATON
13) FOUR-ARMED ALIEN
14) QUADRUPED ALIEN
15) MUTANT WOLVERINE
16) MUTANT PORCUPINE
17) MUTANT WEASEL
18) BAT-THING

TMNT's

¼ PAGE

19) MUTANT HAMSTER (⅓ page)
20) MUTANT DOGS
21) WOLF-THINGS
} 1½ PAGES

22) TERROR BEARS
23) AFTER-THE-BOMB MISC. MUTATED ANIMALS
24) DR. FERAL

FULL PAGE

PLEASE SEND THESE 24 ORIGINALS BACK A.S.A.P., AFTER YOU'VE FINISHED STATTING THEM. THE OTHERS WILL FOLLOW SHORTLY.

* PLUS ALL THE ORIGINALS FROM THE TMNT COMIC THAT YOU REQUESTED. THESE ARE VERY DEAR TO US, AND ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN DO TO GET THEM BACK TO US QUICKLY AND IN GOOD CONDITION WILL BE APPRECIATED. I'M SENDING EVERYTHING BUT THE COVER TO #4, WHICH I FEEL IS TO LARGE TO SHIP SAFELY WITH THIS BUNCH. I'LL GET IT OUT SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.

TAKE CARE!

-Pete

After character creation, he wrote the Animal Powers. Then the Animal Psionics. And then the stat blocks for just a few mutant animals that turned into a lot of mutant animals. "But that's all I can squeeze in," he insisted.

Of course, it wasn't.

The next thing I knew, Erick asked to create some new villains that resulted in the *Terror Bears, Doctor Feral,* and *Caesar and the Weasels*. Then he asked if he could put those villains in their own adventures to help bring them and the game to life. Next he asked if he could include his playtest group's characters, the *Sparrow-Eagles*. After that he asked if he could write the book's introduction and How to Play a role-playing game, and the Cause of Mutation, and ... well, I think you can see where this is going. By the time the book was finished a mere four and a half weeks later, Erick had written 90% of the book. Piece by piece. It was inspired work and so much fun. Everything I knew the game needed to be! And more.

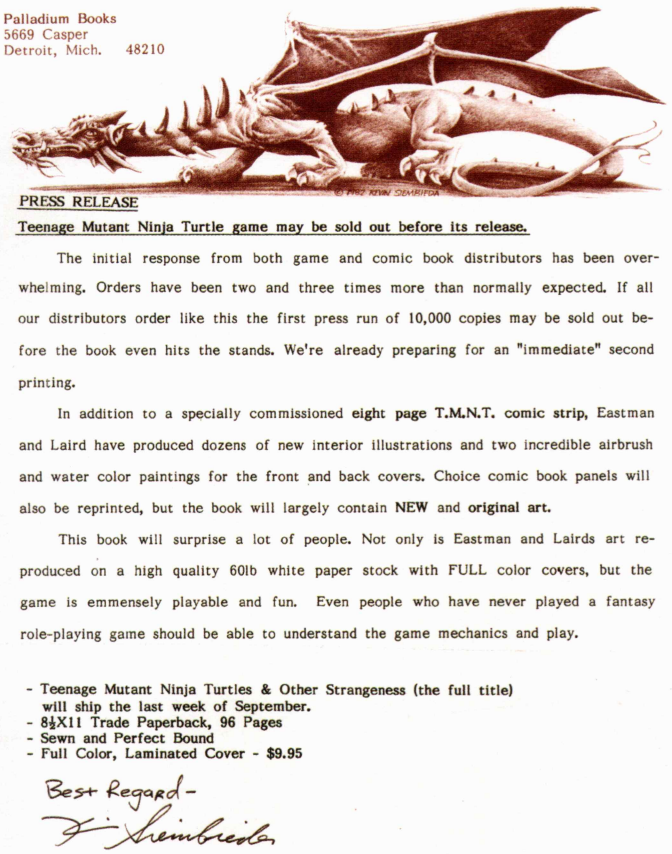
Throughout the whole process, Erick and I talked numerous times a day, I reviewed faxed over text, and we playtested everything either in person or over the telephone. Then he would go off and ferociously playtest every aspect of the game with different player groups – whoever he could corral were solicited to game. Many playtests were one-shot adventures designed to test specific rules. Erick dedicated his entire three-week vacation to the cause working around the clock. He was consumed by the project and spent nearly every waking moment working on the game. In man hours, he crushed the equivalent of 12+ work weeks into a four and a half-week period. (Not counting the prior six months during which he and I had thankfully explored the core concepts behind the game.)

It was my idea to license the TMNT comic books, have rules for creating ANY mutant animal, the book's title, and other key elements, but it quickly became Erick's baby. He hammered out brilliant rules for creating and playing mutant animals and wrote most of the book! I think I did 19 of the 112 page game – Rounding Out One's Character, Alignments, Experiences, Skills, and Equipment, with some input from Erick on Ninjitsu and Martial Arts. (Erick had studied fencing, Kendo, and Aikido). In the end, Erick had hammered out the beautifully simple, fun, and intuitive game rules, animal creation, fan-fave villains. His adventures, characters, and words brought it all to vivid life. Pure genius. A masterpiece, that for many, would be their first introduction to the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and for others their first introduction into the realm of role-playing games.

When Erick's work was done, my work started. Art direction, layout, paste-ups, and more marketing and advertising. Our love for the TMNT, the artistry of Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird, and our shared vision, all culminated into a game that has thrilled generations of gamers, introduced the Turtles to a whole new audience, and has stood the test of time as one of the most beloved RPGs ever published.

Of course we didn't know any of that back then. I had a bold plan for the license to get Palladium's products into comic book stores. The price, the page count, the Eastman and Laird artwork and comic strip were all strategic and deliberate. I knew we had a great product, but would it find its audience? Would it be Palladium's door into comic book stores? All we could do was wait and see.

The first print run was a bold 10,000 copies. That was a huge number back then. It sold out in three months. I printed 10,000 more and they sold out in three months, too! That's when I know we had a smash hit on our hands. We would go on to sell more than 170,000 copies of the core rule book alone. We printed 20,000 copies of the *TMNT Adventures* sourcebook and shipped 14,000 copies day one. I sent that sourcebook out for a second printing that afternoon. The next thing we knew, Palladium Books was ranked Number Three in the RPG industry. A position we held for decades.



Palladium Books
5669 Casper
Detroit, Mich. 48210

PRESS RELEASE

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle game may be sold out before its release.

The initial response from both game and comic book distributors has been overwhelming. Orders have been two and three times more than normally expected. If all our distributors order like this the first press run of 10,000 copies may be sold out before the book even hits the stands. We're already preparing for an "immediate" second printing.

In addition to a specially commissioned **eight page T.M.N.T. comic strip,** Eastman and Laird have produced dozens of new interior illustrations and two incredible airbrush and water color paintings for the front and back covers. Choice comic book panels will also be reprinted, but the book will largely contain **NEW** and **original art.**

This book will surprise a lot of people. Not only is Eastman and Lairds art reproduced on a high quality 60lb white paper stock with FULL color covers, but the game is emmensely playable and fun. Even people who have never played a fantasy role-playing game should be able to understand the game mechanics and play.

- **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness (the full title) will ship the last week of September.**
- **8½X11 Trade Paperback, 96 Pages**
- **Sewn and Perfect Bound**
- **Full Color, Laminated Cover - $9.95**

Best Regard-

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness was Palladium Books' first mega-hit, but not our last. *Robotech®*, *Ninjas & Superspies™*, and *Rifts®* would all hit store shelves over the next five years garnering acclaim and big sales. Meanwhile, the sale of the TMNT black and white comic books where were also soaring.

LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

I loved working with Erick. We would collaborate on other books and he and I would become life-long friends closer than brothers. Despite the dramatic and stressful circumstance that brought Erick onto the creation of the *TMNT & Other Strangeness Role-Playing Game*, the experience was super-exciting, fun, and rewarding in ways we never imagined in the moment.

He and I had a blast.

Likewise, the friendship that developed between me and Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird was amazing and stood the test of time. To have played a role in what would become comic book, gaming, and toy history is astonishing to me and beyond cool.

It was still back in the late 1980s or early 1990s that I mentioned to Kevin Eastman I never could find a copy the first printing of *TMNT #1*. Good ol' Kev told me he had three copies left and he would mail me one. I told them that wasn't necessary, but sure enough, a few days later it arrived in the mail in perfect condition. I wish he and Pete had signed it, but to this day it remains one of my prized possession, not because of its monetary or historical value, but because it came from a dear friend. Kevin also sent me and my wife tickets to attend the TMNT movie premiere in New Hampshire. Unfortunately, we couldn't make it because we were moving into our new house that weekend and we could not reschedule with the moving company. Whaaah, what a disappointment.

MAINSTREAM NINJA TURTLES MANIA

We were floored by how quickly the Ninja Turtles caught on. It really was like capturing lightning in a bottle. Soon the Turtles were everywhere. The first cartoon mini-series was just a hint of what was to come. Merchandise exploded into the mainstream in anticipation of the 1990 live action TMNT movie, and *Turtlemania* was on after the film's release. We were so happy for our friends Kevin and Peter. I've always said their great success could not have happened to two nicer people (three including Mark Freedman, their licensing agent).

What most people don't know is that I, Kevin Siembieda, played a pivotal role behind the scenes in connecting Eastman and Laird with licensing agent Mark Freedman. The guy who would help carry the TMNT into toys, TV, and film and turn the Turtles into a marketing phenomenon.

DOES THE NAME MAKE YOU SMILE?

I was talking to Mark Freedman, the founder of Surge Comic Licensing, about a potential license and he asked that I send him some product samples. Specifically, other licensed properties. As fate would have it, I sent him a copy of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness RPG* amongst other books.

Something about the TMNT name and concept resonated with Mark in a big way. Every time we spoke, we'd talk more about the Ninja Turtles than anything else. Soon he'd be calling me just to talk about the TMNT. This would go on for a year.

"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Does the name make you smile?" he'd ask. "I smile every time I say it. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

Mark and I would talk about the TMNT comics and characters, the sales for the RPG and sourcebooks as well as the sales of the comic books – which I happened to know because of my friendship and work relationship with Peter and Kevin. Then he asked if I thought little kids would enjoy the Turtles and whether I thought they'd make good toys. I said my children started reading the comics at ages 6 and 8 and would love the Ninja Turtles toys, so yes, of course kids would love TMNT toys.

Clearly the wheels were turning in the mind of Mark Freedman, and soon questions turned to Mark sharing with me his marketing ideas for the TMNT as a toy line, cartoon, and more. He told me how he was friends with the president of a startup toy company called *Playmate Toys*, and that he thought they would be interested in doing a Ninja Turtles toy line ... and probably a cartoon mini-series to spark interest. We talked about the TMNT all the time and his ideas for exactly how he would market them. The more Mark talked about the potential, the more excited and passionate about it he became. It was fun to be on the ground floor of it all – even *before* Eastman and Laird!

One day, I finally said to Mark something like, "Your ideas sound great to me. I think they'll be a hit and you know you want to do this, but remember, I'm not the owners of the TMNT. I'm just a licensee. I think it's time you talked to Eastman and Laird."

I told Freedman what nice guys Kev and Pete were, and he asked me to tell them what he had in mind and to pass along his telephone number. So I called Mirage Studios and spoke to Peter Laird about it. Only Pete was skeptical. "Thanks, but I don't know, Kevin? It sounds too good to be true. I think we'll pass."

Peter Laird poster art with Michael Dooney paints.

"Hold on," I exclaimed. I told Peter that I had worked with Mark and had known him for some time now, and as far as I could tell, Mark Freedman was the real deal, a good guy, and trustworthy. I then pointed out that he and Kevin had nothing to lose by talking to Freedman. "Just give Mark a call and hear what he has to say, Pete. Remember, you guys hold all the cards. If you're not interested, say no, but it can't hurt to hear what he has to say. Think about it."

So Eastman and Laird thought about it, called, Mark Freedman arranged a meeting with the guys, and the rest is history. How crazy is that?

If I had not sent Mark the *TMNT & Other Strangeness RPG* the Turtles might never have become the multi-media sensation we all know and love today! I was so happy for them when it all came together in such a big way. And especially happy that we all stayed

pals. I mean, I could call Mirage Studio anytime about anything, and they'd be so friendly and accommodating, chatting, offering advice, sharing information, their plans, hopes, and dreams, and even shared their artists. Both Jim Lawson and Eric Talbot would do art for us. I have nothing but wonderful memories of all those guys. It was a great time as both our companies soared in our respective industries.

MULTI-MEDIA SUCCESS SUNK THE RPG

The TMNT licensing and mass marketing would become a historic phenomenon on par with *Star Wars, GI Joe, Transformers, Barbie*, and the *Power Rangers*. A lot of the credit belongs to licensing agent Mark Freedman of Surge Comic Licensing and to Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird's deft approval of licensing partners that would help carry the Ninja Turtles into the stratosphere. There were animated TV series, blockbuster live action movies, Playmate Toys' action figures and vehicles, more comic books, coloring books, posters, T-Shirts, pajamas and other clothing, costumes, bedspreads, candy, and hundreds of other licensed products.

Almost all of it aimed at the 4-8 year old demographic and their bewildered parents and grandparents.

40 years later, TMNT has fans of all ages around the world know and love the Ninja Turtles. Some via the many different comic books, others from the toys and animated TV shows, still others from the movies, videogames, or Palladium's RPG and sourcebooks. Heck, many people have grown up with the Turtles. They openly profess their love for them, wear TMNT apparel, and play the games anywhere.

Ah, but that was not the case back in the early 1990s. The transition from cutting edge, black and white comic books and role-playing game aimed at teens and young adults to Saturday morning cartoons and children's toys, quickly made the general public perceive the Ninja Turtles as the new Mickey Mouse and friends.

In the eyes of most people who had discovered the TMNT through the cartoons and toys, the Ninja Turtles were for little kids – and had always been for little kids. The cartoons and mass market push of the TMNT to children and their parents branded our Turtles in a Half-Shell as child's fare. That *kiddification* of the characters did not severely impact the niche TMNT comic books whose audience could read them in the privacy of their home or could be touted as the grown-up's Ninja Turtles, but the booming children's demographic sunk Palladium's role-playing game. We may all love our favorite childhood cartoon characters, but at the time, no self-respecting teenager or college student wanted to be associated with the children's Ninja Turtles, it was embarrassing. This was also a time when being a nerd was not a badge of honor, it made you a dork and subject to teasing and ridicule. Thus, as the mass market kid toys and children's products grew to epic proportions, the role-playing game's sales plummeted.

The year before the push to children, Palladium was selling 4,400 copies a month of just the core rule book alone. A year after the movie's release in concert with the cartoons and tons of other merchandise for young children, Palladium's TMNT RPG sales began to drop by half every single month until stabilizing at around 200 copies a month. Less for the sourcebooks. And those numbers continued to slowly dwindle. We decided our license with the Ninja Turtles had run its course.

Cover painting by Simon Bisley for the unrealized 1997 relaunch.

We had planned to relaunch the RPG in the late 1990s, hence the Simon Bisley cover that graced *The Rifter #10* (it was intended to be the cover of the new, updated, *TMNT & Other Strangeness RPG*), but sales had dropped so low, we weren't sure we could recoup the licensing fee let alone production costs, so we decided to let the license go. We had enjoyed the TMNT license for 15 wonderful years. A long time, so it seemed like the right move to make. Looking back, I wish we had kept the license, but at the time letting the license go seemed like the smart move. I stayed in touch with Mirage Studios for many years after, and Mark Freedman at Surge Licensing would became Palladium's licensing agent for 20 years. In fact, it was Mark who helped to broker the Rifts® movie deal with Walt Disney Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer Films. (No, they never made the movie.) I still think of Mark as a trusted friend.

THE RPG RETURNS

The *TMNT & Other Strangeness RPG* has always remained close to our hearts and never forgotten. The desire to bring it back in one form or another always at the back or our mind. The challenge was to do so in a way that made it special and would honor Erick Wujcik's original brilliant game as well as Eastman and Laird, and our respective fan bases. In fact, I considered doing a deluxe color edition when Nickelodeon reached out to me in 2015. It was fun to learn there were a lot people at the company who knew and loved the old RPG and wanted to see it back in print. Sadly, the timing was not right for us.

I also had discussions with IDW's game division in, I think it was 2018, and a year or two later with a Hollywood gent with

clout and love for the Ninja Turtles and all of Palladium's RPGs and sourcebooks, but that didn't pan out either.

Sean Owen Roberson, Palladium's Creative Director, had inquired about Palladium bringing back *TMNT & Other Strangeness* even before I asked him to join me at Palladium Books as my business partner. Again, we had to wait until the time was right. When it was, we reached out to Paramount and the results are the beautiful books and crowdfunding backer exclusive items that has excited so many TMNT fans and gamers. And just in time for the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' 40 Year Anniversary. Erick Wujcik is no longer with us to celebrate this milestone, but I know his spirit is smiling upon us. He would have loved these deluxe, redux editions and all the backer exclusives.

A FEW CHOICE SIEMBIEDA TMNT REMEMBRANCES

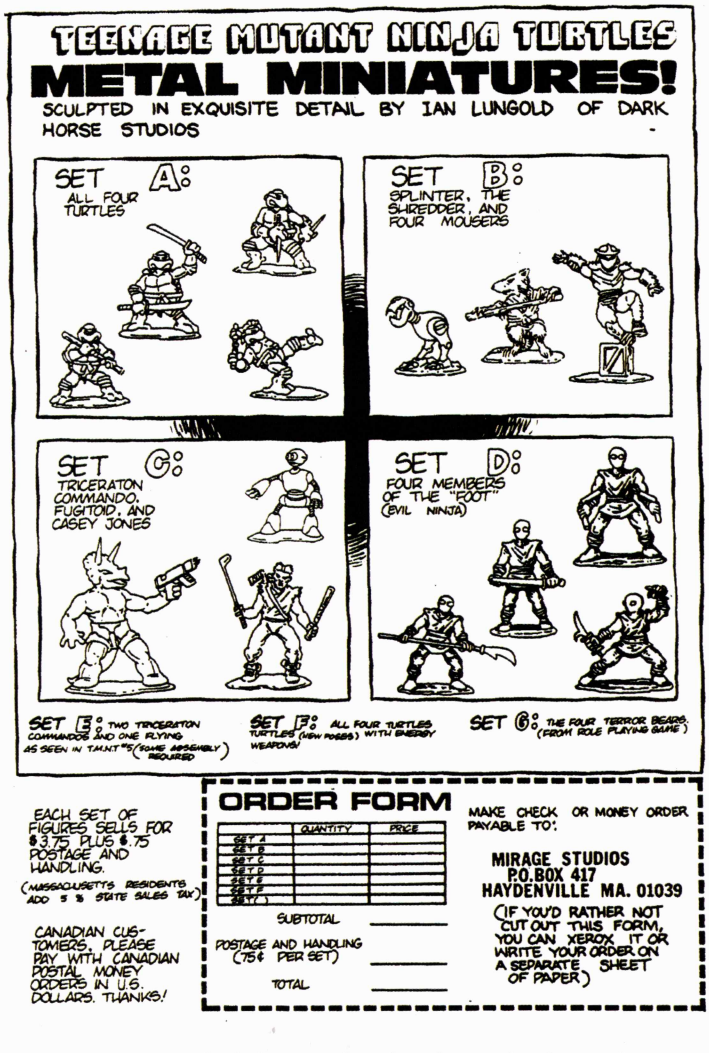
I have a zillion fond memories about Erick Wujcik, Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird (two of the nicest people on the planet), other Mirage Studio creators, the TMNT comic books, Palladium Books, and my experiences with fans. I've recounted some in the Making of the TMNT & Other Strangeness history, but here are a few more of my favorites. Enjoy.

OH NO, IT'S RAINING!

One day I'm talking to Kevin Eastman and we're just shooting the breeze, probably about art and storytelling, when he suddenly exclaims: "Oh no! It's starting to rain, I have go!" "So what if it's starting to rain?" I asked in a puzzled voice. "You don't understand, TMNT #3 is sitting on the driveway and we need to get it inside before they get soaked!" "Go. Go." I exclaimed as I hung up the phone. I don't remember if it was actually issue number 3 or 4 but it was one of those super-early issues. Likewise, I don't remember if they had to get it inside the garage or into the basement. I often say garage when I tell the story, but I'm pretty sure it was the basement. Mirage Studios and Palladium Books both started as small, independent, startup companies and we found we both often took many of the same cost-cutting measures in those very early days. I remember unloading pallets of books through the basement window of the house we were renting. Mirage Studios did the same thing. Kevin laughed about it later that day when he called me back.

HARLAN ELLISON, TMNT FAN

So one day one at the Palladium office in 1988, Alex comes to me and says, there's a guy on the phone claiming to be the famous science fiction author, Harlan Ellison, and he'd like to speak with you. I didn't know Harlan Ellison but loved his work, so I was intrigued and took the call. "Hello?" "Hi, this is Harlan Ellison." "Thee Harlan Ellison?" I asked. "Yes, the thee himself." I thought that was hilarious. Who knew that Harlan Ellison was a TMNT comic book fan. In fact, his collection included the *TMNT & Other Strangeness RPG*, sourcebooks, and the **Dark Horses miniatures**. The miniatures were the reason he was calling. Harlan had an artist who painted his miniatures, and being the eccentric fellow that he was, Harlan needed to know the precise color schemes intended for Doctor Feral and the Terror Bears. "You can have your painter color them in whatever way you'd like." I said, trying to be as accommodating as possible. "I know that," grumbled Harlan, "but I'd prefer to have them painted accurately and true to how you, the creators, envision them. I'm very exacting in the representation of my painted figures. I want them to be perfect." "Umm, I need to think about that and should call the author." I said. "Great," said Harlan. "I'll have my miniature painter call you tomorrow afternoon." "Umm, yes, that would be fine." So I called up Erick and we spit-balled ideas for those RPG characters' color schemes. I actually kept those notes for many years in case we ever needed them. Sadly, I lost or had thrown them away years ago, so the colors in this book may not be the ones I gave to Harlan Ellison 30 years ago, but they are probably darn close. Fifteen years later, Erick and I would meet Harlan Ellison at *Dragon Con* and I brought up our call about the miniatures. To my astonishment, he seemed to genuinely remember it and thanked me for being so helpful.



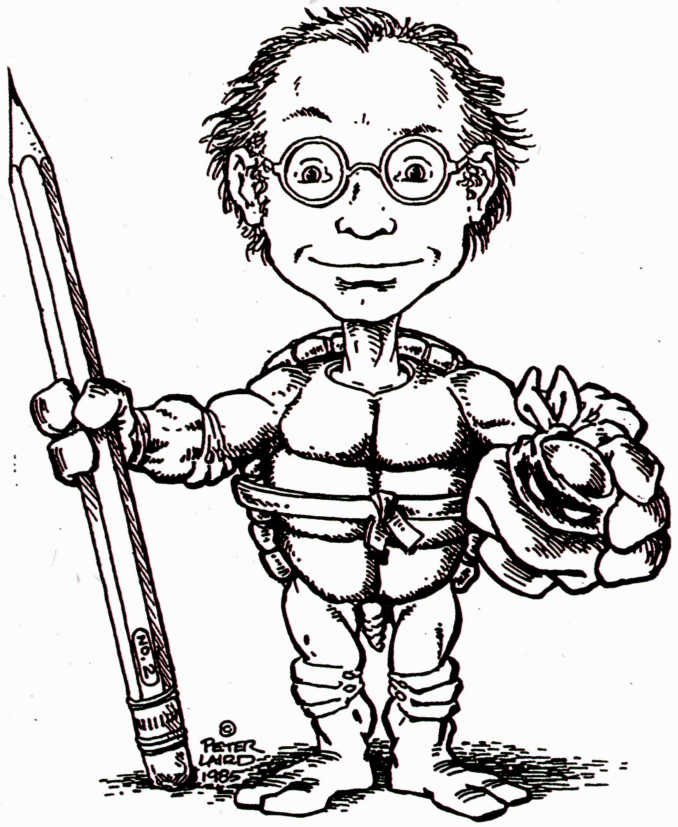
Art Note: It is a little known fact that the art for the Dark Horse Miniatures advertisement was hand drawn by Peter Laird. It appeared in various places including some issues of the black and white TMNT comic books.

DARK HORSE MINIATURES

I became friends with the owner of *Dark Horse Miniatures*, Ian Lungold, because he would also license some of the *TMNT*

& Other Strangeness RPG characters including the Terror Bears and Doc Feral from Palladium Books. He was a very nice guy and we spoke often in those early days. I believe they were based in Ohio or Indiana, and if I recall correctly, his main business was making munitions. He literally made bullets, so doing pewter/lead miniatures was just a fun sideline.

Dark Horse Miniatures – no relations to Dark Horse Comics – is often credited as the Ninja Turtles' first licensee, but I dispute that. Though I think it depends on how you look at it. It's only for bragging rights, but I firmly contend that Palladium Books was the first company to *sign* a TMNT licensing agreement with Kevin and Peter. Dark Horse Miniatures was the second a month or two later. However, it took Palladium longer to design, create, and publish a role-playing game book than it took Dark Horse Miniatures to sculpt, cast, and release the miniatures on the market. So Dark Horses Miniatures was the first to *release* physical TMNT licensed products to the public, but not the first to license the Turtles. A distinction I like to tease Kevin Eastman and their old licensing agent, Mark Freedman, about from time to time.



Peter Laird self portrait wearing a Ninja Turtle costume.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA WHAT?!

I need to share this story because it's sweet, funny, and deeply personal.

Everyone in our circle of friends knew the TMNT intimately and were fans of the comic books and our game. That included the artists and staff at Palladium Books, all like uncles to my two children. My son and daughter loved Palladium's role-playing game and read the black and white TMNT comic books. They also had the inside track on the Mirage Studios guys who felt like family friends even though they had never met them in person.

So in October, 1987, my 10 year old daughter Monica decided to dress up like one of the Ninja Turtles for Halloween.

With the help of her mother and some paint touch-ups by me, she created a very impressive paper-mâché Ninja Turtle shell (front and back), and committed to the costume 100%, right down to the knee and elbow pads, a green painted skullcap to hide her long hair, and green body paint for her face, hands, and arms. She chose to portray Leonardo and wielded a pair of blunt wooden swords purchased at the Michigan Renaissance Fair two months earlier; the swords tucked nicely into her handmade, brown vinyl belt. She looked great! I wish I could find those photos to share with you, but alas they remain elusive.

The problem for Monica was that in 1987 most of the world had yet to discover the Ninja Turtles. So every house we went up to, the person handing out the candy would ask, "And what are you supposed to be? A space alien?"

"I'm a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle – Leonardo!" Monica would fiercely announce at every single house as she drew her swords and struck an impressive combat pose – long before the popularity of cosplay.

"A what?" they would ask again.

"A Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle – Leonardo!"

And repeat. Over, and over, and over again, at every single house, without fail. It made sense, Monica's costume looked amazing and stood out from all the other costumed children. She looked like nothing they had seen before, and was tall, so at age 10 she was actually Ninja Turtle height.

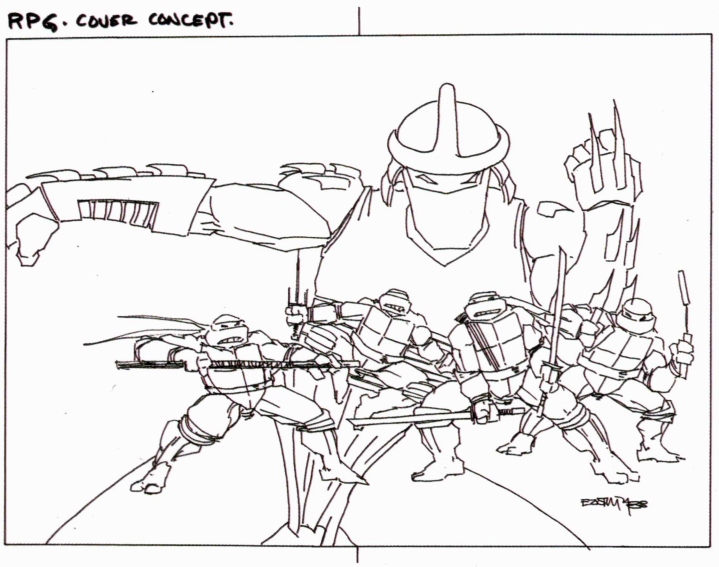
"What's wrong with all these people?" Monica finally exclaimed in frustration. "How can they not know the Ninja Turtles?!"

Two years later, 1989, the whole world was falling in love with the Turtles and half of the trick or treaters were garbed in TMNT masks and costumes, brandished plastic weapons, and cheerfully declared they were a "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle." Of course, that was after the 1988 debut of the TMNT cartoon, the growing toy line, and the hot anticipation for the live action Hollywood movie coming in summer 1990.

I sometimes wonder if any of those people who had asked, "a Teenage Mutant what?" ever wondered how that one little girl in Dearborn, Michigan, knew about the TMNT before anyone else.

Cowabunga, indeed.

– Kevin Siembieda



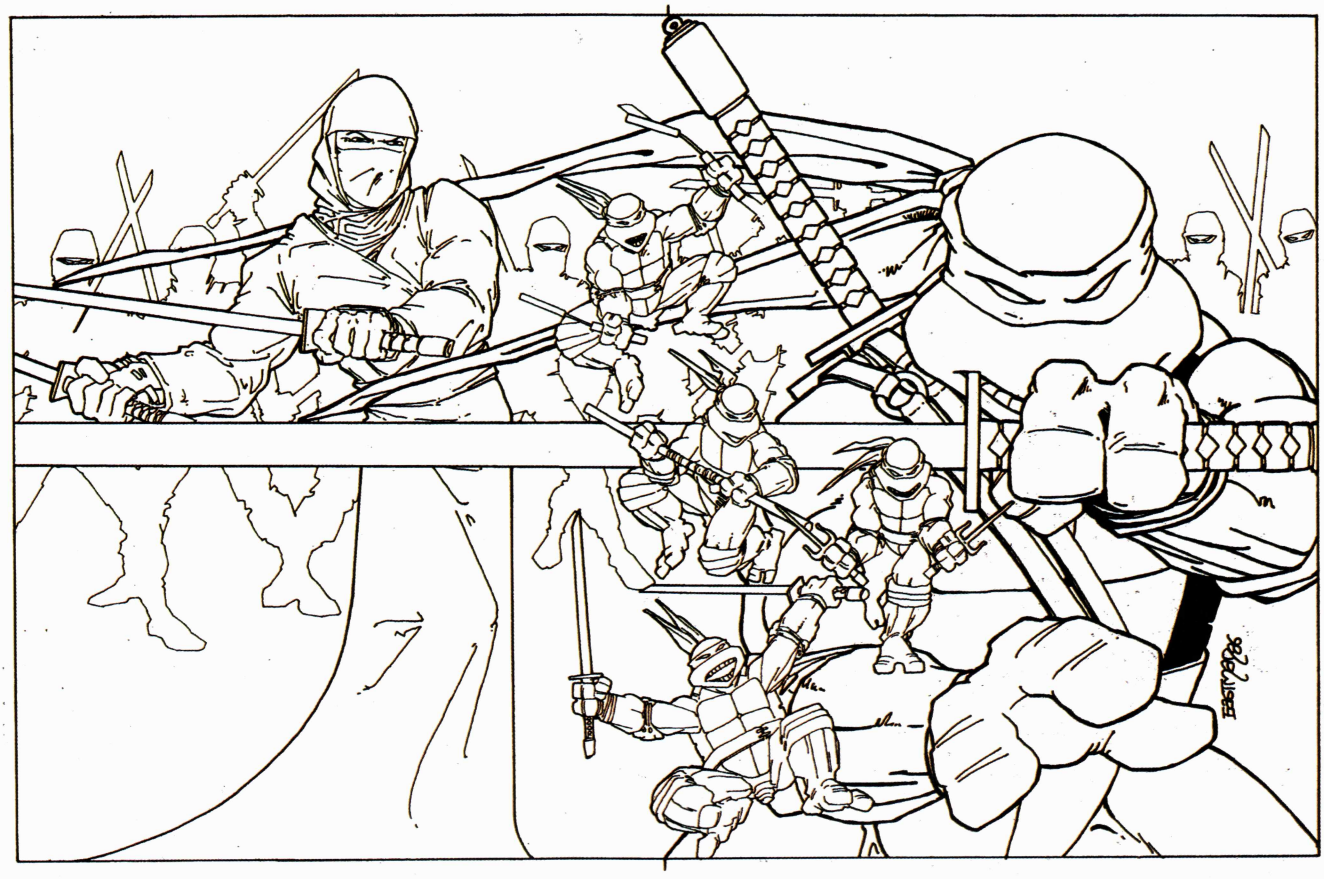
• ROLE PLAYING GAME • CONCEPT • ONE •

• ROLE PLAYING GAME • CONCEPT • TWO •

• ROLE PLAYING GAME • CONCEPT • THREE •

• ROLE PLAYING GAME • CONCEPT • FOUR •

Kevin Eastman cover sketches. Above: Road Hogs concept.
Right: 1997 TMNT&OS reboot concepts.
Left: TMNT Adventures concept. Below: TMNT Adventures final inks.



TRIBUTES

MONICA STANFIELD – ERICK WAS FAMILY

Erick Wujcik was a prominent figure throughout my childhood. I knew him as my parents' colleague, a gamer, a writer, but mostly, as family.

I can't speak to Erick as a writer or a game master, but what I can say is that he was one of the biggest dreamers I have ever known. Erick lived large and unapologetically through a beautiful imagination and shared that gift with everyone around him.

Erick lived in the world of possibilities as a matter of fact. Growing up, I can remember the indelible imprint this had on me - that anything is possible.

His hug and his laugh and his heart were just as huge as his personality. I am forever grateful for the magic that Erick Wujcik brought into my life. He dreamt big and out loud, and without even trying, showed us all how it's done.

- Monica Stanfield
Family

(Note: Monica is Kevin Siembieda's daughter, a business professional, with two children of her own. She grew up with notable family friends like Erick Wujcik, Kevin Long, Keith Parkinson, and many other brilliant lunatics. She was even shot with a prop-gun as part of a demo at a science fiction convention by legendary make-up artist Tom Savini.)

KEVIN LONG – AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

What can I say? I never foresaw the Turtles blowing up the way they did. That makes me a buffoon. Kevin Siembieda certainly wasn't. He saw the potential of those pizza-loving heroes long before they became the global phenomenon they are today. Kevin was always a shrewd businessman, with a keen eye for promising intellectual properties like TMNT and Robotech®. But his instincts about the Turtles so early in 1984, the year the first black and white TMNT comic books hit the shelves in comic books stores nationwide, was like divine providence. How'd Kevin know that property would take off like it did? You'd have to ask him. But I'm willing to bet some mystical incantation or maybe just a roll of some dice played a role in Kevin seeing the future like he did. Regardless, what a deal that turned out to be!

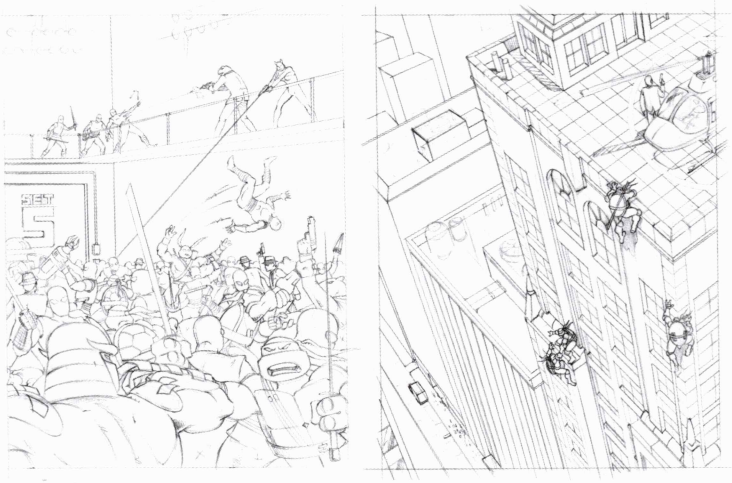
Securing the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle license in 1984 was a major coup for Kevin and rest of us that worked at Palladium Books. Those days were certainly heady days, especially for me. After contributing to several Robotech® books, I was given the opportunity to create the cover painting and some interior art for the Transdimensional Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Sourcebook. It was a dream come true to work on artwork inspired by some of my favorite comic book characters. And to top it off, I got to collaborate with one of the greatest Game Designers in all of role-playing, Erick Wujcik. I owe a great deal to Erick, who was instrumental in introducing me to Kevin Siembieda and the team at Palladium Books. Without Erick entering my life, I would have never had the opportunity to work such career defining projects like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, *Robotech®*, or even *Rifts®*!

I met Erick while I was still a student at the Center For Creative Studies Art School, now the College of Creative Studies, in downtown Detroit. I stumbled upon an index card on the school's job board seeking artwork for a science fiction game and to contact a fellow named Erick Wujcik at the Detroit Gaming Center. The Center was within walking distance of my school, so one sunny Saturday I headed over there, was warmly greeted by Erick and a short tour ensued. Of course, I had heard of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but was amazed by the plethora of rooms filled with gamers playing RPGs, wargamers plotting strategy on large tables with complex terrains and some folks playing regular ol' board games. The place was amazing! That day was my formal introduction to role-playing and the very start of my career doing artwork for RPGs. All thanks to the very talented Erick Wujcik giving me the chance to do some artwork on a science fiction game that never materialized. Thank-you, Erick! Rest in peace, my friend.

But let's return to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Palladium Books. Working on the *Transdimensional Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* book was an absolute delight, and I still consider its cover one of my finest works at Palladium Books. That cover was so much fun to paint and to this very day, I regret parting with it. Kevin [Siembieda], if you still have it, perhaps hanging on your wall at the office or at home, and ever consider selling it, please let me know. Following *Transdimensional*, I had the pleasure working on *Truckin' Turtles* – another of my favorite covers – and then *Turtles Go Hollywood*. The latter was particularly special because I had the opportunity not only to create the full-color cover but also much of the black and white interior art, including designing a couple of new villains for the Turtles. I also had the opportunity to paint a life-size painting of Raphael that we displayed in our booth at Gen Con [We still have it, it's in my office... ~*Sean*]. I painted that display on masonite with acrylic paint in Palladium's old warehouse that was devoid of air-conditioning and adequate lighting while fighting off a swarm of mosquitoes. Overall, the Turtles played an indispensable role in my RPG art career at Palladium, an experience I'll always cherish.

Thanks Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Donatello! It's been an unforgettable journey!

– Kevin Long
Artist



Turtles Go Hollywood interior art sketches by Kevin Long.

JIM LAWSON – ART, TMNT, AND ME

It was all so new, back then. No – not the drawing. I've always been a prolific drawer – but everything else. The time of silly, little one-shot freelance jobs was behind me, and I was now a real actual professional and I was getting published.

You see, back in the late 80's, I had become a comic book artist. It was all so strange, and yet at the same time, it wasn't. I guess maybe I'd found what I was meant to do.

I was in a good place.

There was enough work going on, not only with the Turtles, but on my own little comic too. Other jobs came my way, and I can remember especially when the offer to work on Palladium's *TMNT & Other Strangeness* book came along, it was an entirely new and appealing gig.

Although I can't distinctly remember back then, I'm sure that I only had the vaguest idea about what a role-playing game was. I looked at it as just an adventure. And I'm not only referring to the mechanics of the game there, but a drawing adventure. Characters and creatures from the limits of one's imagination. I hope I did it all justice – I do remember having tons of fun with the project and even to this day I get comments and compliments about the work I did for it back then. I've even gotten requests to ape the drawings I did for the RPG. It's great and amazing to hear that after all these years, it's stuck with people and made an impact. I always think that you

draw for yourself, but when you hear that your work has resonated with your fans- that takes it to another level beyond. Just a little aside here- the illoes that I did for *Transdimensional TMNT* (1989) were among my first published works using Duo-Shade paper for the gray tones. What was also fun and different about this, was the coolness of just designing the characters. In comics it's one of the aspects that I most look forward to. Here too there was the freedom to just draw scenes, and not have the responsibility of any sequential-ness. You can draw an insanely complicated motorcycle for instance, without the concern and knowledge that if it were to be in a comic, you would have to draw the thing 20 times from multiple different angles. I could simply put these characters and their machines in an environment and not have to show how they got there, or explain the context. BAM – mutants fighting each other, perfect.

I'm reminded of this as I was creating the new piece for this remastered edition. I got to make a crazy drawing of Casey and Raph on a bike, exploding from a tunnel as mutant dogs jump all over them. No explanation needed and the point is just to look at it and get a kick out of it (hopefully)! Right there- that's the joy of illustrating a book like this.

Lastly, thanks Palladium – for giving me a shot so early in my career. I will always be grateful that you trusted me with your idea and please know you were a watershed in my life as an artist.

– Jim Lawson
Artist

Cover concept progressions by Freddie E. Williams II.

FREDDIE E. WILLIAMS II – IT'S BEEN AN HONOR

Precariously stacked books populated my older cousin's bedroom- his bookshelves could not contain them all, which is why they spilled out, into the footpath. Standing in his doorway, I watched him move role-playing books from one tall pile to another, calling out their titles to me, while explaining why he knew that I would love them? My mind was being blown!

"Yep, all these books are all connected, compatible – you can MAKE a character in one, and play them in any of these worlds: *Robotech® ... Heroes Unlimited™ ... Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ... Palladium® Fantasy.*

Moving closer, through the threshold of the door, I said "Wait, wait, what was that one, the Turtles book?"

All those books sounded interesting (and ARE endlessly so), but that was the first time I had ever heard those words together:

Teenage.

Mutant.

Ninja.

Turtles.

They had such a ring to them, I HAD to know more!

In the coming months, everything in my creative brain began to open up – *Palladium® Fantasy*, *Ninja Turtles*, *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Robotech®* – while I simultaneously read the reprints of the Mirage Ninja Turtles comics – the combination of which I still find inspiring!

The threshold that I walked through that day, back in 1987, was more than a doorway of a messy bedroom, it was into the endless possibilities & creativity. Of character, story, & art!

The threshold from simply enjoying worlds into creating them!

Later: *Rifts®, Beyond the Supernatural®, Ninjas & Superspies™* - and many other comic books, all nourished that creativity!

Palladium helped teach me to love reading and research: blending creativity with math. In the years that followed, I have written/co-plotted stories, utilizing random event tables and character creation formulas from Palladium books!!!

1999, Scott Johnson noticed my mail-in art submission while visiting the Palladium offices, advising Kevin Siembieda to take a look at my stuff – leading to Palladium Books hiring me for my first paid freelance illustration jobs! I'm grateful to them both for that!

2015, I was lucky enough to draw the *Batman/TMNT crossover*, which fortunately for me, allowed me to draw LOTs of the Turtles, while becoming friends with Kevin Eastman. Leading to many collaborations with him!

Kevin Siembieda / Palladium Books! Kevin Eastman / Ninja Turtles!

They stand among the foundational pillars of my inspiration, my creativity and who I am as a person. They are heroes to me, and I'm lucky to get to draw for them, work with them, and to know them as friends!

I'm honored to be involved with the new Palladium *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness* books; this feels like a full circle. Thanks for letting me be involved.

– Freddie E. Williams II
Artist and Gamer

MIKE MAJESTIC – HONORING THE ORIGINAL COMICS

I have a feeling I may be one of the only illustrators contributing to this project that wasn't a huge Turtles fan going in. I do not mean this in any disparaging way towards the Turtles or any Turtles fans that contributed to this project, quite the contrary. Working on and researching this material has been a process of discovering a really cool thing (the original comics) you were surprised you missed out on. It's because of this very special project that I am now a huge fan of what Eastman and Laird created with their original vision for the Turtles. Better late than never I say.

As surprising as this may sound, I never crossed paths with their original comic in all of my years reading comics and producing art. Of course I was familiar with the TMNT due to the animated versions, but I never actually saw a significant body of the original comics until working on this project. Once I was onboard I immediately fell for the indie comic punk rock sensibilities, cinematic compositions/framing, and straight up entertaining storytelling. No question, this made me want to do everything I could to honor the original work Eastman and Laird put into their comic.

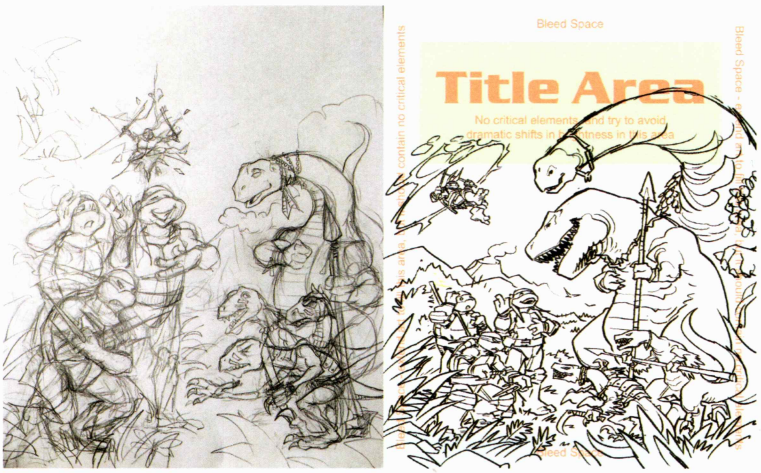
When Kevin and Sean asked me if I would be interested in doing colors for this project my immediate reaction was a bit of surprise, as I never imagined I'd end up working on TMNT. I'm typically known for mecha, sci-fi, and concept design work. As much of an unexpected surprise it was I suppose I can now add TMNT to my small 80s I.P. gigs bingo card, along with having worked on *Transformers* (Dreamwave Productions) and *Robotech®* (Palladium Books). Sometimes with creative projects you get a really fun curveball thrown your way and TMNT certainly qualifies. I've loved every minute of it.

The Metal Hurlant vibe of the original black and white comics, whether intentionally there or not, inspired me to go with a more painted approach to the digital color in order to have a bit of roughness and energy to the color that would compliment the punk rock indie sensibilities of the art (which I was really loving). However, as I crystallized my approach I also began to add hard, cell shaded style rim lighting and highlights as well. This felt more like a hybrid painted comic/animation aesthetic that works well.

My kindest thanks to Kevin Siembieda and Sean Roberson for asking me if I'd be interested in taking on color duties for this very special re-release of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness* and a huge thank you to Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird for creating such imaginative and inspiring comics and allowing us to play a bit in their creative sandbox! I hope everyone enjoys all of the hard work everyone involved has put into this material you're currently holding in your hands right now.

Absolute best to you all dear readers and please enjoy your time and role-playing adventures with the heroes in a half shell, now with some extra Palladium CMYK razzle dazzle!

– Mike Majestic
VulnePro: Hard Boiled Nouveau Animation Design Artist



Left: sketch by Kevin Siembieda. Right: cover rough by Sophie Campbell.

SOPHIE CAMPBELL – THIS GAME SET ME ON MY PATH

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness might be the most influential book, RPG or otherwise, in my life. It not only got me interested in TMNT when I was little, but it led me to getting into comics and considering comics as a career path. I still take a ton of inspiration from it even now, all of Kevin and Peter's incredible artwork in the core game book, Erick Wujcik's super fun mutant-building BIO-E rules and the great original characters found in the game (Caesar and his weasels, the Sparrow-Eagles, etc.), and the overall down-to-earth gritty tone of the book. Palladium and this game set me on the path I'm still on today.

– Sophie Campbell
Artist, Writer, and Gamer

LUIS ANTONIO DELGADO – WITH US THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES

At the moment of me writing these words I'm over 40 years old. I had a pretty normal childhood and adult life, many things I once held close to my heart are gone, and things I never thought I would cherish now give meaning to my life, but there's only one

thing I have never lost passion for in all these years and that's TMNT.

If you ask me what my childhood was like, one of the first images that comes to mind is of a 6 year old me playing with my new puppy wearing orange Band-Aids on my elbows pretending to be Michelangelo. Of course, I didn't resemble Michelangelo at all, my attempts to learn how to skate or use plastic nunchucks were futile, but the imagination was there, I was a Ninja Turtle too.

Today, I still pretend to be a Ninja Turtle but now I do it behind a computer coloring some of the most amazing TMNT projects out there.

I started working on TMNT back in 2014 coloring the first crossover with IDW's *Ghostbusters*. I can still hear the intro for both 80's cartoons and I can still feel the excitement in my heart when I first heard I was gonna be a part of that project.

Ten years have come and gone, but every time I get to work on TMNT it feels just like that first time. It doesn't matter if it's for the IDW ongoing run, Palladium Books, the Saturday Morning Adventures, or the fan favorite, The Last Ronin.

I believe each TMNT character represents something we like to see in ourselves. It might be leadership, courage, wisdom, family, or the capacity to smile through the darkest times, but we all see ourselves through the Turtles. I've been lucky to meet countless fans through the past years, and every time I get to chat with them, even if it's only for a few minutes, I know their stories are just like mine. We all feel the same way about the Turtles and we all hope they can be with us throughout our lives. I believe the future is bright and that there will be many more stories we will share together, until then...

Cowabunga!

– Luis Antonio Delgado
Artist, Colorist, and Turtle

NICHOLAS KAY – A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART

The turtles have a special place in my heart. I was a child of the 90s, born in the auspicious year of 1987. My early years revolved around watching worn VHS tapes of Saturday morning cartoons, most notably the original Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles animated series.

Access to the Turtles was heavily restricted, as my parents had firmly placed them in the "mind rotting junk" category of entertainment. However, my love for the pizza-devouring quartet was well known and, despite my parents' wishes, action figures, puzzles, books, and other brand miscellany found its way into my grubby paws via well meaning friends, aunts, and clueless grandparents. One particularly precious gift was a VHS copy of the *Coming Out Of Their Shells* musical tour, which I found to be a source of both spectacular engrossment and unmitigated confusion.

Looking back nearly thirty years, it's incredible that I now find myself providing art direction on an IP which had such a profound impact on my childhood. I often wonder what the six year old version of myself (smeared with green face paint, wearing an ill-fitting set of green pajamas, sandwiched between two halves of styrofoam computer packaging, and being mostly blinded by a poorly crafted eye mask) would think if he could see what I now do day to day.

Working on the Turtles has been a pleasure and I cannot wait for fans to finally enjoy all of our hard work. I'm immensely proud of the miniatures we've produced and hope they are received with as much love as was put into them.

– Nicholas Kay
Art Director, TransPerfect Gaming

CIRO NIELI – IT TURNED MY WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

It was the summer of 1984 and I was experiencing Ninja Turtle madness. The first Mirage Studios' **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** comic book turned my world upside-down, but there was nothing else to be had, it wasn't this modern era of brand-marketing. In those days you could only mail order for an iron-on t-shirt, maybe a poster and eventually some really cool lead figurines. I was happy enough to paint those mini Turtle figures and wait patiently to read a new issue maybe twice a year.

Later on, when I was about 12 years old, I discovered the gaming store in my local mall. I didn't know what a role-playing game was but the artwork lured me in. Amongst the books of sorcery and warriors, I found *TMNT & Other Strangeness*. I couldn't believe there was a Ninja Turtle book I didn't know about, and it was full of new Kevin and Peter artwork. I quickly bought it!

I had no clue what a role-playing game was: the book was full of information about mutations, martial arts, weapons and new villains- that was all I needed to see.

Up to this point I was alone in TMNT fanaticism. Imagine a time where no one knew what a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle was! None of my friends collected comics, nor would they play an RPG. The extent of my lonely fandom consisted of re-reading my beat-up comics and drawing Turtle bros in battle (back then there was no pizza- just ninjas and blood).With no chance of playing a campaign, I did what you do with a book; I read it front-to-back.

Then I started to create new monsters and mutations from the world of *TMNT & Other Strangeness*.

I had aquariums and terrariums growing up. I loved lizards and amphibians and fire belly newts were a cheap pet commonly found in Pennsylvania. I started playing with the idea of a mercenary newt, out for vengeance: I would name him the *Newtralizer*. I drew this character over the years and developed him further – even when I was an undergrad animation student.

Decades later, I put *Newtralizer* into the 2012 TMNT show at Nickelodeon. In the character's original origin, he was created in a lab by a strange sort of duck, who was inspired by *Doctor Feral*. The Newtralizer eventually became a violent alien bounty hunter: part *Predator*/part *Punisher*.

My favorite mutants from the rule book are the *Terror Bears*, I wanted them to appear in the 2012 series. Eventually this idea morphed into the concept of the *Dream Beavers*: dangerous demons who live in the dream dimension. Dream logic was a little easier than dealing with ESP. I would have loved to have seen the Terror Bears eventually cross paths with my Beavers, and maybe Casey Jones. The Terror Bears are actually a frightening concept that deserve more stories. Imagine a cute, living teddy bear that can invade your thoughts with doom or incapacitate you with

pain. They were like tiny, horrific, furry X-Men. It begs for a new TMNT Halloween Special!

Over the course of the 2012 Turtles production, the Palladium Books would often be referenced.

During the space-traveling season 4, I carried a photocopied *TMNT's Guide to the Universe* in a binder, collected with the growing show designs and script notes. Later, *Road Hogs* was carried around as I was managing the epic, post-apocalyptic world of *The Wasteland Warrior*, the series finale.

Before the 1987 cartoon made my heroes childish, this book sat side-by-side with the classic Mirage books. My set of Palladium books have moved along my grade school backpacks, through dorm room floors, to my desk at Nickelodeon, but now rest peacefully in my old Turtles comic box.

Thanks Palladium, they have served me well.

Maybe it's time I finally start up a campaign.

– Ciro Nieli
Artist, Writer, Filmmaker and TV Producer

RAMÓN PÉREZ – LIFE IS A FUNNY AND CONNECTED THING

I was a little too young to snag the first wave of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* when the indie comic burst onto the scene. By the time the iconic cartoon debuted in 1987, I was already a bit past the prime age for pizza-loving turtles and their adventures. My introduction to these heroes in a half-shell came about in a different, albeit no less thrilling, way.

As an enthusiastic *Dungeons & Dragons* player and game master, I was always on the lookout for new adventures and characters. One day, a friend who shared my love for role-playing games introduced me to Palladium's 1985 release, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness*. It was this game that familiarized me with Leonardo, Donatello, Raphael, and Michelangelo. We rolled up some characters eager to embark on some adventures. Inspired, I also quickly made my way over to my local comic shop and picked up all the copies I could of the original black & white comics by Eastman and Laird.

While the name didn't hold much weight with me when I first flipped through the *TMNT & Other Strangeness* RPG, Erick Wujcik, the writer of the sourcebook, would be a man I would come to admire and respect in years to come.

Fast forward a decade, and I found myself on the receiving end of a phone call from Kevin Siembieda, the founder of Palladium Books. Having recently sent out my first batch of portfolios in hopes of finding work as a freelance artist in the RPG publishing industry, I was surprised to learn that Kevin had taken notice of my work and was impressed. As Kevin put it, I was on top of the slush pile and he needed an artist as he had just lost a heavy hitter and thought I could fill the gap.

Little did Kevin know he had woken me up, I was a bit bleary-eyed and tired from, most likely, enjoying a night out with friends the evening prior. It was a Friday morning, and he asked if I had any more samples I could send over for him to review. Fifteen or so images would suffice. I said yes, and would send them out come Monday. I hung up the phone and quickly prepared to draw and ink 15 pieces over the weekend - as I had nothing.

That phone call marked the beginning of a long and beautiful relationship with Palladium Books — a relationship that would evolve from a professional collaboration into a cherished friendship. The Palladium family welcomed me with open arms, and before long, I found myself making the 4 to 5 hour drive from my home to Detroit to join them for weekends filled with barbecues, events, conventions, and concerts.

It was during one of these visits that I had the pleasure of meeting Erick, a good friend of Kevin's and the brilliant mind behind many of Palladium's sourcebooks, including the iconic *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness* RPG. While I never had the opportunity to contribute to the original TMNT RPG directly, I did have the honor of lending my talents to *After the Bomb®*, another of Erick and Kevin's creations. The original artwork I created for that project remains among my most treasured pieces to this day.

Although my time at Palladium eventually came to an end as I shifted my focus to comic books and creator-owned projects, the memories and lessons I gained from Kevin and the Palladium family have stayed with me. Kevin served as a mentor, teaching a young punk valuable lessons about the industry, professionalism, artistic tools (he is an artist himself), and the entrepreneurial spirit. Like Eastman and Laird, who started their own journey by self-publishing their first B&W TMNT comic, Kevin blazed his own trail by founding Palladium Books and developing his own game system.

Life is a funny and connected thing. The people you meet along the way inadvertently steer you through conversation and inspiration. I've had the opportunity to collaborate with the Henson family who was behind the 1990 TMNT film that ignited my imagination at the time. And now, to be part of this collection alongside Kevin, Erick, Eastman, and Laird feels like joining a legacy. As creators, our work is a testament to our existence, and I am deeply honored to be a part of Palladium's revitalized collection of their Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles RPG book series.

Now, it's time for a classic pepperoni slice...

– Ramón Pérez
Artist and Creator

STEVEN CUMMINGS – ONE OF THE FIRST

The legendary *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness* role-playing game from Palladium Books is one of the first RPGs I ever played, flipped through, and rolled up characters for. There was so much awesomeness between the covers of the core book that it was hard to really wrap my young mind around it all. Plus, it was such an amazing game that the process of just rolling up characters was fun all on its own.

In addition to TMNT being the first comic book I ever collected, it was also my introduction to Palladium Books and their world of RPGs. I was already playing *Dungeons & Dragons* at the time but TMNT was on another level. Crazy animal characters, aliens, and oh yes, ninjas!

With the news of the rerelease I could not dust off my old copy and start telling my kids about it fast enough. Thank you to Eastman and Laird for the stunning and bold art and the mind-blowing stories and thank you Kevin, Erick, and the crew at Palladium for gifting the world with this epic game!

– Steven Cummings
Artist and Creator

MIKE ROOTH – GIDDY AWE

I couldn't possibly overstate the impact this amazing book had on my formative years as a young artist and dreamer, or how it continues to inspire and provide me with amazing creative resources. This book and its affiliated sourcebooks (with a personal nod to *Ninjas & Superspies*™ and *Heroes Unlimited*™) were always by my side from the start of what has been a wonderful life-long journey as an illustrator and creator.

Thirty-six years ago my friends and I started up a campaign and spent every weekend (for years) playing characters that lived and breathed in that rich and gritty TMNT world. The memories (and characters) have stayed with me all this time.

Twenty years ago I was teaching art classes to both kids and adults; mostly basic fundamentals, but occasionally with a focus towards comics and character creation. I brought my old weathered copy of *TMNT & Other Strangeness* RPG to class to share with the students: it was a hit!

In fact, I loaned it to one very eager student and I never got it back.

But how could I blame the kid? The artwork was so rad!

The character designs and the write-ups and statistics are so cool and add so much richness to stuff that we were already crazy about. And of course the character creation system is so perfect in that beautiful Palladium way. But it was gone, and I would miss it horribly for years.

I told that story during the pandemic on a live online sketch show, and a dear friend went out and found me a perfect copy of the *TMNT & Other Strangeness* RPG to replace mine!

I immediately busted out my old set of red dice and rolled up a random mutant animal character and it was like being 12 years old again.

Now I find myself sitting here in giddy awe as I'm writing this, having been bestowed with the most wonderful opportunity I could have imagined as either an awkward ginger art kid or an old bearded pro; a chance to contribute my artwork to this deluxe, new hard cover edition of *TMNT & Other Strangeness* RPG.

Wild, eh?

– Mike Rooth
Artist

ERIK BURNHAM – THE FIRST RPG I'D EVER SEEN

My memories of *TMNT and Other Strangeness* are unconventional compared to others', I'm sure. Y'see, the thing is that I never got to play role playing games. I lived too far out in the middle of nowhere almost every place my family moved while I was growing up, and when I found out about this game, specifically, I was living in Wilton Minnesota, right next door to the small city of Bemidji. (A place someone once told me they thought was made up for the first season of TV's Fargo.)

In any case, I'd recently discovered the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles by way of the first episodes of the animated show, and the Turtles were the talk of my elementary school. A friend of mine, however, was already well-versed in the property thanks to, you guessed it, the role-playing game, discovered in a bookstore on a family trip. He happily showed it off and embraced his schoolyard celebrity as a TMNT expert.

This was the first RPG I'd ever seen – remember, I lived in the middle-of-nowhere; it's a miracle I saw it at all – and I was transfixed by everything. I begged to borrow the sourcebook, and I had a lot of fun using it to make up characters (superheroes of mutant origin, monsters, and other strangeness) and then I argued with my friends at school about why my creations were so much cooler than theirs. It was gaming without the game.

I borrowed that book so many times you'd think my parents would've taken the hint to gift me a copy for a birthday or Christmas, but they never did, and when the friend whose copy it was moved away, my time with the book ended.

I thought about the book over the years, especially after I started writing Turtles comics for real (I... might have included one or two of my hazily remembered creations in the stories I've written) and always wondered if it might, someday, come back into print.

I think I broke the sound barrier clicking the "back it now" button when the campaign for the new edition launched. After literal decades, I'll have my own copy at last.

(...But I still live in the middle of nowhere.)

– Erik Burnham
Writer, Artist

TOM WALTZ – THE ART WAS PRETTY DARN SWEET

Actually, the way I was exposed to the Turtles for the very first time is a bit funny. I was in the United States Marines in 1988, stationed in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and one of the guys in my unit at the time was a huge comic book collector. Besides his massive collection of comics, he also kept a bunch of role-playing game catalogues sitting around the barracks and one day I snagged one and was flipping through it and came across an ad for a role-playing game called *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness*. I remember saying to my pal, "*TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES*? That's the goofiest thing I've ever heard." He told me not to make fun because they were becoming very popular. Outwardly, I just scoffed at the idea... but internally, I had to admit the art was pretty darn sweet!

– Tom Waltz
Scribe of IDW's first 100 issues of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Co-Writer of TMNT: The Last Ronin with Kevin Eastman

The TMNT & Other Strangeness advertisement seen by Tom Waltz.

A tribute to Erick Wujcik (1951-2008).
Your stories are forever in our hearts.

Art by Kent Burles
Colors by Michael Majestic

Art by Jim Lawson
Colors by Luis Antonio Delgado

Art by Dan Berger
Colors by Steve Lavigne

Art by Steve Lavigne

Art by Eric Talbot

Art by Freddie E. Williams II
Colors by Jeremy Colwell

Art by Sophie Campbell

Art by Sophie Campbell

Art by Ciro Nieli

Art by Ciro Nieli

Art by Mike Rooth

Art by Mike Rooth

Art by Larry Elmore
Colors by Luis Antonio Delgado